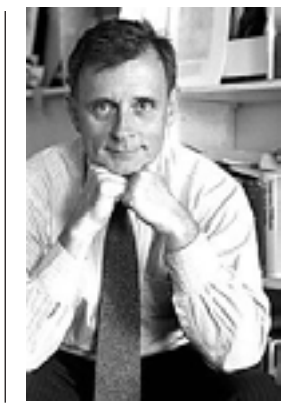
the
Central Voice
CENTRAL PA'S LGBT NEWS SOURCE

Get to know the new director

PG. 11



CONVERSATION WITH HIS EMINANCE

PG. 12

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Visibility: Critical

Lehigh Valley Transgender Renaissance sees the need for peer support and guidance

"We've been around for more than 20 years," Corinne Goodwin, 58, says about Lehigh Valley Transgender Renaissance.

Originally LVTR was affiliated with the national group Renaissance Transgender Association. "Now we're an independent group affiliated with Allentown's Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center," Goodwin says.

In the past two years, "we've undertaken significant efforts to evolve beyond being a support group that meets monthly," Goodwin explains, describing a changing landscape. The group has been involved in starting support groups for trans-masculine individuals and parents of transgender people. They collaborate on Transgender Day of Remembrance ceremonies.

"We have monthly dinners, movie night, holiday and summer gatherings," Goodwin says. They're 'organic,' often a lost feature in organizations as assimilation has spawned boards, budgets, bylaws, bios and formalities clearly not organic but institutional. Regular second Saturday of each month meetings draw about 30 people.

All programs and activities are offered free of charge (excluding dinner costs). There is a suggested donation of $5 for each monthly meeting. Food is provided at monthly meetings. "We've created a great setting for peer support and guidance," Goodwin says.

Corinne Goodwin

LVTR is visible.

"We do educational programs in the community, table top events, have a web site with twice monthly information emails," Goodwin says. They also provide two scholarships to the annual Keystone Conference. Goodwin writes a quarterly column for *Lehigh Valley Gay Journal*.

Please see **VISIBILITY**, page **26**

Necessity remains the mother of invention for SpectrumScore app founders Naveen Jain, Phil Williams, Jun Jeon.

Call me a doctor

LGBT-friendly healthcare search? There's an app for that

By Central Voice

"Patients are a spectrum. Healthcare should be too," that's our mantra says Phil Williams, one of three principals in the development of an app that identifies LGBT friendly medical care.

Fresh from the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association's 35th annual conference, Williams was pumped. "Not only did he receive a bunch of positive feedback, but he established partnerships with several LGBTQ+ health organizations whose resources we can't wait to feature on the website," he told *The Central Voice*.

"These past few days, we've received an outpouring of support from patients and providers across the nation. Many of you have personally messaged us with loads of useful feedback on features we could integrate into SpectrumScores," Williams says.

SpectrumScores is expanding into selected cities. Alder Health Services, Harrisburg and Lancaster, is part of the app network.

"Adler Health is pleased to be part of this 21st Century innovation. The more ways we can reach the different communities we serve with culturally competent care, the more ways we are of service," Alder Health CEO Rosemary Browne says.

The Central Voice: What motivated you guys to produce SpectrumScores?

Phil Williams: I met Naveen and Jun at the "Problem Night" for an innovation and entrepreneurship competition called HealthX Labs hosted by Univ. of Penn's medical school. Team leaders pitch ideas to medical, engineering, and business students. They form interdisciplinary teams to come up with the most

Please see **DOCTOR**, page **18**

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INTERNATIONAL

UNITED NATIONS

13 NATIONS VOTE AGAINST BAN

The United Nations Human Rights Council has voted to condemn countries who use the death penalty on gay people. Although the resolution passed with 27 countries voting for the measure – 13 countries including the United States voted against. Being gay is still punishable by death in six countries including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Yemen. Although not countrywide, there are also parts of Nigeria and Somalia where the death penalty is in use against LGBTI people too. Meanwhile, gay people are also being killed in so-called ISIS-held territories in Northern Iraq and Northern Syria. The resolution doesn't call for an end to death as punishment. Instead, it calls on countries who have the death penalty to make sure they do not use it in a 'discriminatory manner.' This means not using the death penalty on: people with intellectual disabilities, below 18 years of age at the time of the crime, pregnant women, for apostasy, blasphemy, adultery, or consensual same-sex relations. The US voted against the resolution.

AZERBAIJAN

POLICE ARREST DOZENS OF GAY AZERBAIJANIS

Police recently detained dozens of gay and transsexual people in Azerbaijan following a number of raids around Baku, with reports of torture and beatings, local LGBT activists have reported, reports Bradley Jardine for *Caucasus Chronicles*. It's unclear what prompted the roundup, or how many people have been affected. Lawyers working on the cases say that at least 100 people had been detained over a period of several days. "Suddenly, without any clear reasons to us, police officers of the Ministry of Internal Affairs organized raids against gay and transsexual people," said Javid Nabiyev, the president of the Nefes LGBT Azerbaijan Alliance, in a published message. Nabiyev said that the raids took place in private homes and public places where gay people are known to congregate. Some of those detained have been forced to inform on their friends. Family members and lawyers have been denied access to the detainees.

SERBIA

SERBIAN PM ATTENDS GAY PRIDE MARCH

Serbia's first openly gay prime minister joined several hundred activists Sept. 17 at a gay pride march that was held amid tight security in the conservative Balkan country, reports Radul Radovanovic.
Holding rainbow flags, balloons and a banner reading "For change," pride participants gathered in Belgrade, the Serbian capital, before setting off on a march through the city. Many approached Prime Minister Ana Brnabic, greeting her and taking selfies. "The government is here for all citizens and will secure the respect of rights for all citizens," Brnabic told reporters. "We want to send a signal that diversity makes our society stronger, that together we can do more."

EGYPT

EGYPTIAN ACTIVISTS AREN'T BACKING DOWN

On September 22, Mashrou' Leila, a Lebanese band with an openly gay lead singer, played a concert in Cairo. Some who attended waved rainbow flags—an innocuous act in the West, but one that's far more political in a country like Egypt, with a deep history of anti-LGBTQ persecution. Vice's Bo Hanna reports that in the days that followed, seven people, including some alleged flag wavers and at least one other who posted positively about the incident on social media, were arrested for "promoting sexual deviancy," according to the office of Nabil Sadek, Egypt's top prosecutor.Over the last ten days, the situation has escalated into what organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are calling a full-fledged LGBTQ crackdown. By early October, at least 22 people were arrested, and 33 have been arrested in total, by Amnesty International's count, with charges stemming from dating app usage, social media posts, and more. In one case, police allegedly entrapped and arrested a 19-year-old man using a fake dating app profile, a common act in Egypt; he was sentenced to six years› prison on charges of «debauchery» last week. According to Amnesty, some arrested have been subject to forced anal examinations to determine whether they have had gay sex, an act a spokesperson said violates international prohibitions on torture.

CHECHNYIA

CV CORRESPONDENT REPORTS ON SF CONSULATE

Occasional *Central Voice* correspondent Michael Petrelis reports that San Fransisco's record-shattering heat didn't deter about 25-30 neighbors and members of the media from observing the Russian consulate Sept. 2.The group gathered to bring attention to the Chechnyian government's treatment of LGBT people, according to media reports. Petrelis says he "fastened a large rainbow flag over my shoulders and it didn't make me sweat (yeah!), as I held a "Russia -- Stop Killing Gay Chechens!" sign. Handed out cards and informed everyone I was representing Gays Without Borders showing solidarity with Russian and Chechen queer people." The Russians, Petrelis reports, carried out dozens of boxes into vans, more smoke and a nasty smell were emitted from the consulate's chimney, bringing out three large SF Fire Department engines and two dozen firefighters, and consular staff never answered our questions about what was burned in the fireplace.

NATIONAL

75,000 QUEERS AFFECTED BY DACA?

With President Donald Trump deciding to end the Obama-era program that grants work permits to undocumented immigrants who arrived in the country as children, LGBT groups are weighing in on the announcement. The program is known as DACA - Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. There are an estimated 800,000 individuals currently protected from deportation under DACA. About 75,000 are thought to be LGBT individuals, according to the Family Equality Council which opposes the decision. Rea Carey, Executive Director of the National LGBTQ Task Force said: "The Task Force strongly condemns President Trump's action to end the dreams of 800,000 young immigrants through his decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA). This decision is not only unconscionable, it flies in the face of wide bi-partisan support as well as the backing of business leaders, educators, and millions of Americans who fully support DACA and all that it represents for American immigrants.

COUNTY APOLOGIZES TO LESBIAN COUPLE

A gay couple who were subjected to homophobic abuse while applying for a marriage license have received a settlement, reports *Pink News*. Amanda Abramovich and Samantha Brookover had planned to tie the knot in West Virginia in February 2016, but were subjected to a shocking rant by Gilmer County Deputy Clerk Debbie Allen while applying for a marriage license.Allen called the women an "abomination" to God and said their marriage shouldn't be legal. The pair took legal action over the incident – and as part of a settlement today, Gilmer County agreed to apologize to Abramovich and Brookover and issue a public statement regarding the wrongdoing by the County Clerk's office.

EDUCATION DEPT. BACKS OFF GENDER

The Trump administration has dropped plans to change the language the Education Department uses to ask students about their gender when they apply for federal financial aid - after advocates for transgender students expressed concern. The final version of the 2018-19 Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which went live on Sunday, continues language from previous years, asking students: "Are you male or female?" The department earlier this year had proposed changing that question to "Were you born male or female?" That seemed in response to a public commenter who suggested that it would be less confusing for transgender students. But some transgender rights groups had pushed back against the change, saying it would sow more confusion for transgender students seeking financial aid. They said that requiring students to list their sex assigned at birth on the form would raise privacy questions - it could, for example, out a student as transgender. The Education Department said in a notice explaining its decision to scrap the proposal that the "sole purpose" of the gender question is to determine whether a male student between 18 and 25 has registered with the Selective Service, which is a federal requirement for receiving federal student loans and grants. The department said that applicants "should contact the Selective Service System for official guidance if they are unclear how to respond."

STATE

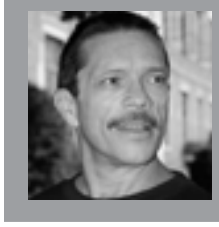
STATE OF WOMEN & GIRLS IN PHILA.

The Philadelphia Commission for Women (PCW) has released the "The State of Women and Girls of Philadelphia". Covering five broad areas - health

Please see **POLITICAL UPDATES**, page **6**

Is there an American Taliban?

Publisher's Voice



By Frank Pizzoli

Personally, I think excessive religiosity is a form of mental illness dressed in theological drag.

Like the graphic proclaims: Need for Allah's Law, Not Man Made Law. The claim calls for the installation of Sharia Law into a nation's civil and judicial affairs. If taken, this step removes the separation of Church and State. That's not something that can happen in the United States.

Or could it?

With announcement last month of the Trump-Pence administration's rule changes on how the Federal government should handle LGBT issues, it's not a hair-on-fire homosexual question to ask: Is there an American Taliban?

Is there a particular brand of organized Christian leaders, churches, and think tanks that resemble the Taliban?

Anticipating hair-on-fire dramatic reactions from those who disagree, I'm not claiming the AT is armed and actively killing LGBT people or rounding them up, like in Azerbaijan (See Political Round Up, page 3). Still, we have our share of attention-seeking professional Christians who glory in their Lord and and political power. (Like most people with power. That's why Lord Acton said: "Absolute power corrupts absolutely".

Personally, I think excessive religiosity is a form of mental illness dressed in theological drag.

I don't seek out or trust excessively religious folks. They can always throw you under a bus for their God, same as they can always find ways to, oh, you know – lie, cheat, steal – for their God.

Take the example of PA Republican Rep. Tim Murphy, a longtime supporter of anti-abortion legislation, who will not seek re-election next year following revelations he had pressured the woman with whom he had an extramarital affair to have an abortion. As a Congressman, Murphy's been anti-choice and anti-LGBT all the way. But apparently not opposed to Abortion for me, not for you. Was he honest in his public life about his positions on abortion?

How is Murphy different than the man in the photo below asking that Allah's Law be followed? How are the promoters of Christian ideals within and on the periphery of the Trump Administration different from the men in the image?

Then we have Vice President Mike Pence.

He's a self-described "Christian, a conservative and a Republican, in that order." When in Congress Pence was a prominent conservative figure in battles over marriage equality and equal rights in the last decade.

On LGBT civil rights, Pence's positions are -

- gay couples signal 'societal collapse'
- being gay a choice
- his keeping gays from marrying was not discrimination, but an enforcement of "God's idea."
- opposed a law prohibiting discrimination against gay people in the workplace
- opposed the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell
- rejected the Obama administration directive on transgender bathrooms.

In October, Trump-Pence Administration rules changes indicates that LGBT people and women will be at risk in some of the following ways, according to the Human Rights Campaign:

• A federal contractor could refuse to provide services to LGBT people, including in emergencies, without risk of losing federal contracts

• Organizations that had previously been prohibited from requiring all of their employees from following the tenets of the organization's faith could now possibly discriminate against LGBT people in the provision of benefits and overall employment status

• Agencies receiving federal funding, and even their individual staff members, could refuse to provide services to LGBT children in crisis, or to place adoptive or foster children with a same-sex couple or transgender couple simply because of who they are

"Many right-wing Christians have convinced themselves that he (Trump) is a leader in the tradition of Cyrus the Great or King David who, while being deeply flawed, can be used as an instrument of God's will," writes Salon political writer Chauncey Devega. "Christian evangelicals' rejection of empirical reality and their habituation into believing the absurd and the fantastical mates perfectly with the zealotry of the broader American right, which views politics as a form of religious fundamentalism."

Are we there yet? Is America turning into a Theocracy like the Muslim nations it opposes?

"Trump is a Trojan horse for a cabal of vicious zealots who have long craved an extremist Christian theocracy, and Pence is one of its most prized warriors," Jeremy Scahill wrote right after the 2016 election in an article for *The Intercept* entitled "Mike Pence Will Be The Most Powerful Christian Supremacist in U.S. History."

"Pence has been a reliable stalwart throughout his public life in the cause of Christian jihad — never wavering in his commitment to America-First militarism, criminalizing abortion, and utter hatred for gay people (unless they go into conversion therapy "to change their sexual behavior," which Pence has suggested the government pay for)," Scahill writes.

Christian jihad?

Are we there yet, at least at the regulatory and legislative level?

Pennsylvania has same-sex marriage not because an enlightened General Assembly took action to provide that basic civil right to LGBT people. They had to follow the US Supreme court decision by not enforcing a law passed in 1996 as a trade-off for budget goodies. Pennsylvania still has no basic civil rights protections for gay folks. Will an LGBT civil rights protection bill be again traded off or watered down to meaningless as a way to cobble together yet another state budget as phantasmagorical as some Christian explanations of our origins?

What's it going to take? What's going to happen next in Pennsylvania and the nation?

the Central Voice

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New rule: What Trump-Pence LGBT changes mean

By Human Rights Campaign

"The Trump-Pence administration launched an all-out assault on LGBTQ people, women, and other minority communities by unleashing a sweeping license to discriminate."

Chad Griffin, Human Rights Campaign president

Calling Trump-Pence administration's decision to carry out a sweeping "license to discriminate" that puts millions of LGBTQ Americans at risk of discrimination, the Human Rights Campaign president Chad Griffin said: "The Trump-Pence administration launched an all-out assault on LGBTQ people, women, and other minority communities by unleashing a sweeping license to discriminate. This blatant attempt to further Donald Trump's cynical and hateful agenda will enable systematic, government-wide discrimination that will have a devastating impact on LGBTQ people and their families. Donald Trump and Mike Pence have proven they will stop at nothing to target the LGBTQ community and drag our nation backwards. We will fight them every step of the way."

In May, President Trump signed an order that threatened to exacerbate anti-LGBTQ discrimination by laying the groundwork for Attorney General Jeff Sessions to implement the license to discriminate. Already, more than 50 percent of Americans live in an area of the U.S. where LGBTQ people are at risk being fired, evicted, or denied services because of who they are—and two-thirds of LGBTQ people report having faced such discrimination in their lives.

A preliminary analysis of the Trump-Pence administration's license to discriminate indicates that LGBTQ people and women will be at risk in some of the following ways:

• A Social Security Administration employee could refuse to accept or process spousal or survivor benefits paperwork for a surviving same-sex spouse

• A federal contractor could refuse to provide services to LGBTQ people, including in emergencies, without risk of losing federal contracts

• Organizations that had previously been prohibited from requiring all of their employees from following the tenets of the organization's faith could now possibly discriminate against LGBTQ people in the provision of benefits and overall employment status

• Agencies receiving federal funding, and even their individual staff members, could refuse to provide services to LGBTQ children in crisis, or to place adoptive or foster children with a same-sex couple or transgender couple simply because of who they are

The guidance instructs federal government attorneys on how to handle matters before them and instructs federal agencies to reconsider current and future regulations in light of this license to discriminate. It's important to note this Department of Justice interpretation of existing federal law is not consistent in the way that federal courts have interpreted these issues and are subject to legal challenges.

The Human Rights Campaign is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people. HRC envisions a world where LGBTQ people are embraced as full members of society at home, at work and in every community.

Legalize marijuana in PA?

by Eugene DePasquale

With Pennsylvania teetering on the edge of another budget cliff, it is immensely clear to me that we must get creative in finding long-term revenue solutions to prevent total financial collapse.

Last month, as a short-term fix to the state's cash-flow woes, I cosigned a $750 million loan from Treasury's Short Term Investment Pool. That loan cost the state $141,000 in interest.

What's more, Treasurer Joe Torsella is forecasting the state's general fund balance will hit negative $1.6 billion by mid-September. This is disturbing.

We cannot keep borrowing or raiding special funds just to keep state government's "lights on." And while belt-tightening is certainly in order, we need a dependable revenue stream to help ensure the commonwealth can continue to serve its citizens.

That said, it is time for Pennsylvania to regulate and tax marijuana to benefit from a booming industry expected nationally to be worth $20 billion and employ more than 280,000 people in the next decade.

I make this recommendation because it is a more sane policy to deal with the critical financial issues facing the state. Other states are already taking advantage of the opportunity for massive job creation and significant savings from reduced arrests and criminal prosecutions for possession of small amounts of marijuana. In addition, it would generate hundreds of millions of dollars each year that could help tackle Pennsylvania's long-term budget problems.

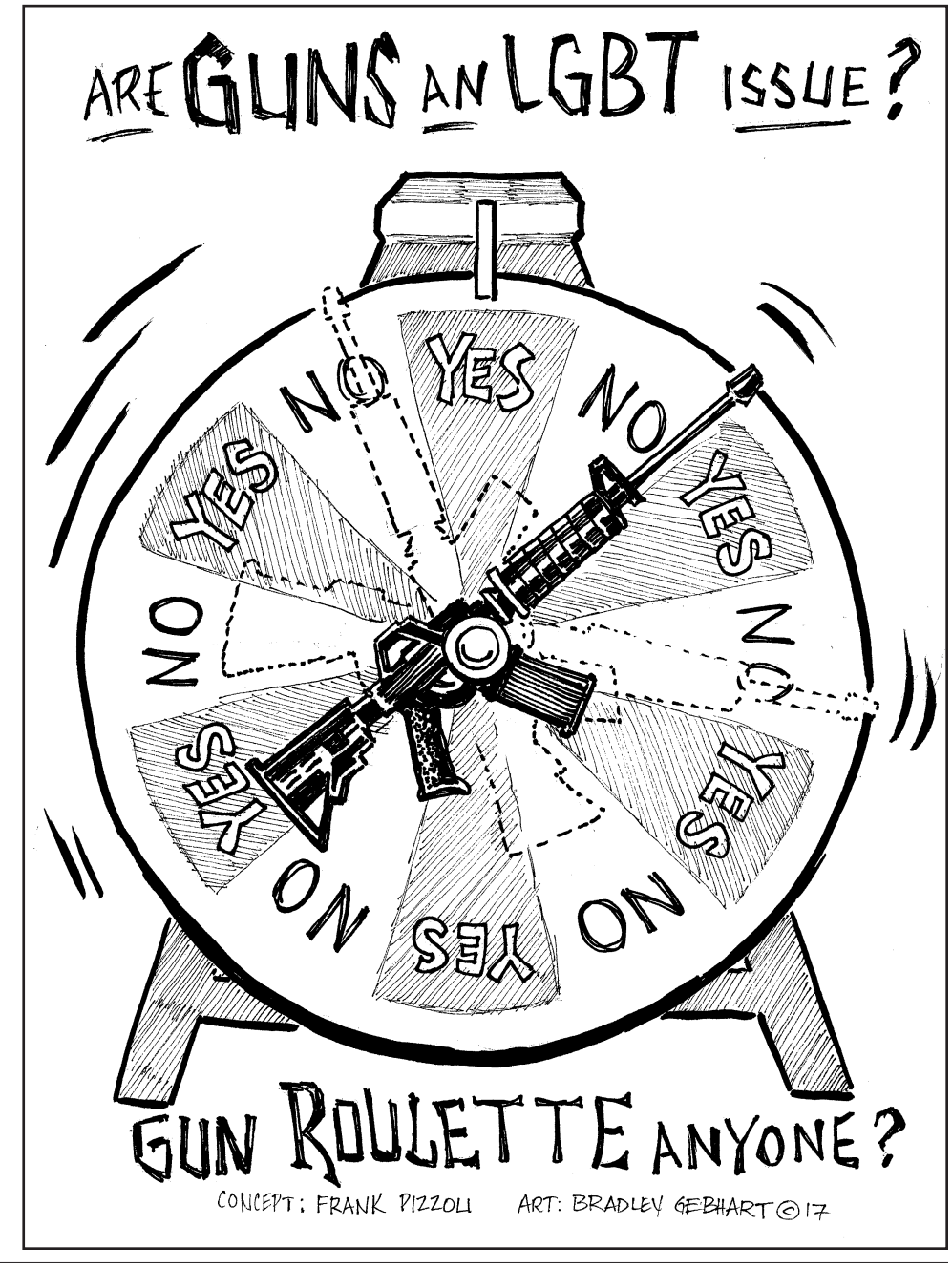
I very conservatively estimate potential revenues from regulating and taxing marijuana in Pennsylvania to be about $200 million a year. Others have put that figure much, much higher. Sen. Daylin Leach (D., Montgomery) has estimated annual revenue from legalization of marijuana could be well in excess of $300 million.

Sure, the tax revenues would be significant, but so are the middle-class jobs and thriving businesses that could be created directly and indirectly by this emerging industry. The longer we wait, the more we will miss out on new business development, good-paying jobs for Pennsylvanians, and tax revenues to support services for residents.

But, there are more reasons for the regulation and taxation of marijuana. Millions of dollars are spent each year on marijuana prosecutions. And prosecution costs are just part of the story. There is also the loss of income and other social, personal, and emotional impacts on those arrested for simply possessing a small amount of marijuana. That's ridiculous. The police and court systems have more urgent issues to address.

What's more, with the growing, deadly opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania, the regulation and taxation of marijuana

Please see **MARIJUANA**, page **20**



Community Voices

"I want to be heard in my healthcare"

HIV activist shares journey to become heard as an individual instead of a risk pool statistic

By Josh Robbins
imstilljosh.com

"I want to be heard." It is really as simple as that. I just want to be heard.

More specifically, I want to be heard in my healthcare. I want my healthcare delivered to me to be personal, derived specifically for me, and the exact opposite of community-wide healthcare. I don't want to be a statistic anymore and I could care less what risk pool in which I've previously been placed or grouped. Sometimes the labels and words like 'MSM' (men who have sex with men) and 'high risk' (sexually) completely veil my identity within my own health. And it isn't okay, anymore.

I am an individual first, and my healthcare needs to be mine. I want to be heard.

As a cisgender white male, I have substantial privilege, obviously. I completely accept that, as neither my fault nor my reward. I cannot affect it. But as an HIV-positive queer trying to navigate healthcare, at times, I feel I am losing. I have yet to find health equity--and I'm putting in the work.

Since the Affordable Care Act was implemented, I have been dropped by insurance companies four times--each followed by brief interruptions of me seeing my doctor and once completely stopping my adherence to antiretroviral meds. I consider myself to be pretty savvy at navigating the system. If I am having trouble with the system, I suspect others may have already just stopped trying to figure it out altogether. But I am not giving up on healthcare. I am fighting to stay engaged.

When I finally make it to the doctor's office, I also want to be heard. In 2012, my first appointment with my HIV specialist focused on community wide recommendations to begin antiretroviral therapy immediately. Sure, there are benefits to starting treatment early, but at that time, arguments could be made for waiting--especially because I was showing signs of being an [HIV controller] (http://www.healthline.com/health/hiv-aids/hiv-controllers).

Since being diagnosed with HIV in 2012, almost every time I have a minor illness or issue arise, I sometimes cringe when telling any non-HIV specialized doctor or nurse practitioner that I am positive because it immediately changes how they treat me both literally and medically. Usually the moment that I disclose that I am positive, everything is attributed to the virus. I understand, accept, and believe that [HIV treatment works] (https://www.cdc.gov/actagainstaids/campaigns/hivtreatmentworks/index.html)--but not every minor issue is related to living with HIV.

I joke sometimes that I could run into a glass door and break my nose, and when I hit the emergency room instead of helping me with my sideways nose, they would be attempting to study how HIV is starting to affect my cognition. "My nose is broken because I ran into a glass door. HIV isn't to blame," I would say.

I just want to be heard.

When I describe some of the health problems that I experience to my physician, like the embarrassing issue of HIV-related diarrhea, I wasn't met with recommendations for [FDA-approved diarrhea treatment] (http://Mytesi.com). Instead, I was told on more than one occasion that my doctor "does not see diarrhea anymore" because of the improved HIV meds that we now have.

Honestly, I do not care what they see or don't see among patients living with HIV, because I am experiencing that side effect. And I wanted to be heard--to be treated individually and not ignored.

This year I have learned that my healthcare requires my active participation, my active engagement, and my resolve to fight battles for myself like I could never imagine I would be fighting.

When an insurance company dropped my coverage in my state--I fought to get new coverage. I will fight at the end of this year again. I will be heard.

When I was told that I had to order my medicine from a specific pharmacy--I fought to keep my pharmacist because I believe they are important in my patient journey because they know all my allergies. I will be heard.

When my doctor made treatment plans based off of statistics instead of recommending what would be best for me as an individual, I fired that doctor and found a new one who now listens to me and takes what I have to say into consideration before making a plan. I will be heard.

As much as we are told to stand up and fight for social issues, to rise up and speak against inequalities, and to do the important work to bring justice and equity to all people--I realize that each of us has the right and needs to be heard as an individual in our own personal healthcare.

I will be heard. You should be heard, as well.

Let's fight to make it happen.

Josh Robbins is a GLAAD Award nominated blogger for imstilljosh.com and an HIV positive patient advocate. He is a paid spokesperson for #MyHIVThankYou campaign sponsored by Napo Pharmaceuticals, Inc., makers of Mytesi. He lives in Nashville and is single and ready to mingle. Follow him @imstilljosh

Political Updates From page 3

economic empowerment, leadership and civic engagement and education - the report is intended to establish the questions needed to grapple with and inform solutions to improve the quality of life for the Philadelphia's women and girls. Report highlights:

• Philadelphia is the only city among the nation's 10 largest where women comprise more of the external workforce than men.

• Women hold 57.5 percent of the jobs in education and medicine in the city.

• The median wage for women in Philadelphia is $29,816, trailing $35,599 for men.

• Domestic violence remains a growing challenge for women. In 2015, women were the victims of 19 homicides due to intimate partner violence. Domestic violence is so prevalent, Women Against Abuse was forced to turn away over 15,000 requests for shelter.

• According to the CDC, 14 percent of 9th to 12th graders in Philadelphia attempted suicide in 2015, with the rate of increase greatest for girls 10 to 14 years old.

• The City of Philadelphia has one of the highest infant mortality rates in the nation at almost nine infant deaths for every 1,000 births.

PHILA. LAUNCHES CLIMATE EFFORT

Mayor Kenney, joined by officials from the City and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, recently unveiled the Philadelphia Municipal Energy Master Plan for the Built Environment, and announced new programs to reduce energy use and clean the city's energy supply. The report provides a roadmap of how Philadelphia's government will work toward reducing the causes of climate change in its facilities by reducing energy use and costs, making operations more efficient, investing in renewable energy and advancing environmental stewardship. This focus is in line with commitments Mayor Kenney has made to meet the goals of the Paris Climate Accord and to transition towards 100% renewable energy. The plan sets four new goals to help meet the City's Greenworks energy and climate visions:

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the City's built environment 50 percent by 2030

Reduce the City's built environment energy use 20 percent by 2030

Generate or purchase 100 percent of all electricity for the City's built environment from renewable resources by 2030

Maintain or reduce the City's built environment cost of energy at facilities

LOCAL

LANCASTER PEACE FEST

"We say today, war and violence don't work. War and violence are a dead end. War and violence are not the way toward a peaceful world. War and violence are not the will of the God of peace," John Dear told a crowd of about 300 Sept. 24 in Binn's Park as part of the Lancaster Peace Fest, according to Lancaster Online. Dear was keynote speaker who wants America to avoid a war with North Korea, eliminate its entire military budget and use that money to feed starving children and shelter immigrants. "War and violence are sinful, immoral, illegal (and) just downright impractical. The time has come for a new culture of peace and nonviolence," he said. Lancaster Peace Fest is a celebration of peace, justice, and nonviolence and all those who are working for a more peaceful and just world. It's a free, family-friendly community event from the Peace Action Network of Lancaster.

Tired of planning your life around diarrhea?

Enough is Enough

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Mytesi (crofelemer):

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- **Treats diarrhea differently** by normalizing the flow of water in the GI tract
- Has the same or fewer side effects as placebo in clinical studies
- Comes from a tree sustainably harvested in the Amazon Rainforest

What is Mytesi?

Mytesi is a prescription medicine that helps relieve symptoms of diarrhea not caused by an infection (noninfectious) in adults living with HIV/AIDS on antiretroviral therapy (ART).

Important Safety Information

Mytesi is not approved to treat infectious diarrhea (diarrhea caused by bacteria, a virus, or a parasite). Before starting you on Mytesi, your healthcare provider will first be sure that you do not have infectious diarrhea. Otherwise, there is a risk you would not receive the right medicine and your infection could get worse. In clinical studies, the most common side effects that occurred more often than with placebo were upper respiratory tract (sinus, nose, and throat) infection (5.7%), bronchitis (3.9%), cough (3.5%), flatulence (3.1%), and increased bilirubin (3.1%).

For Copay Savings Card and Patient Assistance, see Mytesi.com

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NP-390-35

Mytesi® (crofelemer) 125 mg delayed-release tablets

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IMPORTANT PATIENT INFORMATION

This is only a summary. See complete Prescribing Information at Mytesi.com or by calling 1-844-722-8256. This does not take the place of talking with your doctor about your medical condition or treatment.

What Is Mytesi?

Mytesi is a prescription medicine used to improve symptoms of noninfectious diarrhea (diarrhea not caused by a bacterial, viral, or parasitic infection) in adults living with HIV/AIDS on ART.

Do Not Take Mytesi if you have diarrhea caused by an infection. Before you start Mytesi, your doctor and you should make sure your diarrhea is not caused by an infection (such as bacteria, virus, or parasite).

Possible Side Effects of Mytesi Include:

- Upper respiratory tract infection (sinus, nose, and throat infection)
- Bronchitis (swelling in the tubes that carry air to and from your lungs)
- Cough
- Flatulence (gas)
- Increased bilirubin (a waste product when red blood cells break down)

For a full list of side effects, please talk to your doctor. Tell your doctor if you have any side effect that bothers you or does not go away.

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Should I Take Mytesi If I Am:

Pregnant or Planning to Become Pregnant?

- Studies in animals show that Mytesi could harm an unborn baby or affect the ability to become pregnant
- There are no studies in pregnant women taking Mytesi
- This drug should only be used during pregnancy if clearly needed

A Nursing Mother?

- It is not known whether Mytesi is passed through human breast milk
- If you are nursing, you should tell your doctor before starting Mytesi
- Your doctor will help you to decide whether to stop nursing or to stop taking Mytesi

Under 18 or Over 65 Years of Age?

- Mytesi has not been studied in children under 18 years of age
- Mytesi studies did not include many people over the age of 65. So it is not clear if this age group will respond differently. Talk to your doctor to find out if Mytesi is right for you

What Should I Know About Taking Mytesi With Other Medicines?

If you are taking any prescription or over-the-counter medicine, herbal supplements, or vitamins, tell your doctor before starting Mytesi.

What If I Have More Questions About Mytesi?

For more information, please see the full Prescribing Information at Mytesi.com or speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

To report side effects or make a product complaint or for additional information, call 1-844-722-8256.

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Alder Health Services

Put people first in health care; gay angle too

By Frank Pizzoli

"Put People First PA gives voice to everyday people who are struggling to meet our basic needs. We define our basic needs as things we need to live healthy and fulfilling lives — things like education, housing, health care, jobs at living wages, food, and a healthy environment.

We're a membership organization made up mostly of people who know from our life experience that poor and working people need to unite and have a voice. No one else is going to do it for us. We're building, county by county, all across Pennsylvania. We're urban and rural. We're multiracial. We're politically independent. Until we unite, we don't have the power to change things."

-From web site

If PPF is successful, what will the organization have accomplished?

Put People First PA is a human rights organization. Our current campaign is for healthcare as a human right, which means we are fighting for every person, regardless of their race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, body type, employment status, citizenship, nationality, religion, incarceration status/history, to have the right to free, competent, respectful and comprehensive healthcare.

We also know that access to healthcare does not exist in a vacuum, and that our right to health also means we have the right to housing, food, education, a clean environment, and freedom from violence. We will fight for all of these things alongside and concurrent with our fight for healthcare.

We measure success in campaign victories that build our power to secure those rights in Pennsylvania, but also more broadly in how our membership is empowered to stand up and claim our humanity and the rights that (should) come with it.

PPF's audience is...

PPF is a membership organization driven almost entirely by volunteers across Pennsylvania who have a personal stake in our work. Our audience, like our membership, is people who are let down and hurt by the current healthcare system, including poor, working, sick, and disabled people from every area of the state.

Members come from?

PPF has numerous active membership hubs in Central PA (York, Lancaster, Dauphin, Berks, Northumberland, and Adams Counties), Western PA (Johnstown, Pittsburgh, Fayette County), and Southeastern PA (Philadelphia, Delaware and Montgomery Counties), and active members scattered across other areas of the state. There are queer and/or trans people on every local and statewide team and committee of PPF.

What's the LGBT message regarding PPF's work?

Through a toxic combination of discrimination, neglect, and inaccessibility, our current healthcare system constantly fails queer and trans (Q/T) people of all kinds: LGBQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer), transgender, gender non-conforming, and more.

Depending on your location, financial means, and insurance network, it can be difficult (or impossible) to find doctors who are competent and nonjudgmental in addressing the unique medical and cultural needs of Q/T people. This widespread lack of competency leads to medical neglect that creates higher rates of illness and death, which are only intensified for Q/T people with intersecting identities (like Q/T people of color, or Q/T immigrants) or compounding medical needs (like Q/T disabled or chronically ill people).

Additionally, because queer and trans people (especially Q/T people of color) have higher rates of poverty and unemployment than straight and cisgender people, we are also more likely to be impacted by all the ways the healthcare system fails poor and unemployed/underemployed people as a whole.

We don't have a message for the LGBTQ+ community, because we are that community. We center queer and trans healthcare stories in our work, we lift up and develop our queer and trans leadership, and we partner with more explicitly queer organizations like Act UP, Philly Queer Brunch, and Equality Fest in York to deepen our roots in queer and trans justice.

PPF has queer and trans members and leaders across the state because this is an organization and a learning community that welcomes people in the full truth of their struggles and their identities, learns and lifts up each other's stories, and fights for each other's humanity.

Answers to the above questions were prepared by –

Maddie Taterka, who is a queer, gender non-conforming woman. She uses the pronouns she/her/hers and is Co-Coordinator of the PPF Media & Communications Team.

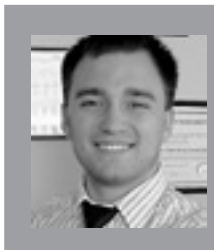
Hilary O'Connell, who is a queer, non-binary transgender person. Hilary uses the pronouns they/them/theirs. They are a member of the PPF Campaign Team.

Carla Christopher, who is a queer/lesbian woman. Carla uses the pronouns she/her/hers and is the Central PA Regional Coordinator for PPF. She is also lead organizer for York's Equality Fest.

Please see photo in **OUT & ABOUT**, page **20**

Self-care for activists is important

Being kind to ourselves. Or, as we say in many social justice movements, self-care. It sounds like a trendy new thing, but it's not.



By Louie Marven

I spent a decade working in the LGBT movement at our local LGBT community center. Half that time I was responsible for youth programs and community education, and the other half I was the executive director. I listened to lots of spoken and unspoken things from our communities during that time.

One of the things I kept hearing (explicitly and implicitly) was about how bad it is to be queer. We feel different from a young age; we struggle to work, go to school, rent an apartment, and build a family in the face of discrimination; we have health disparities; we're sad and outraged.

We have a lot to be outraged about! And we shouldn't let go of that. Something that I continue to struggle with is how to be real about the truly difficult stuff that our communities face, but to embrace our strength, creativity, wisdom, power, and resilience. Isn't it a miracle that in the face of a queerphobic society, we're still here? We are leaders and healers and survivors! I like thinking about us that way.

But what do we do with all the really hard stuff that's still there? Reframing the message about our community doesn't do very much to turn pain and hardship into happiness--especially for those in our communities who are facing multiple forms of oppressions.

In a recent email to its membership, Center Action Network, which supports LGBT community centers in doing advocacy work, reflected on how we can stay in the fight for the long haul:

Studies have demonstrated that the psychological benefits of kindness are reflected in the circuitry of the brain too. When we regularly engage in acts of kindness, we create neural pathways that enhance the flow of feel-good endorphins and mood elevating neurotransmitters. With research to back it up, it seems clear that doing good for others can also do good for us. Don't forget to take care of yourself too! Listen to your body, validate your needs, and treat yourself as you would a dear friend.

Being kind to ourselves. Or, as we say in many social justice movements, self-care. It sounds like a trendy new thing, but it's not. In a June 2017 NPR article called The Millennial Obsession With Self-Care, writer Christianna Silva explains:

Self-care existed long before millennials did. Ancient Greeks saw it as a way to make people more honest citizens who were more likely to care for others. In her 1988 book, A Burst of Light, Audre Lorde wrote that "caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation and that is an act of political warfare."

Today, self-care, as it's defined by Gracy Obuchowicz, a facilitator and self-care mentor and coach in Washington, D.C., "assumes that we're OK as we are and we just need to take care of ourselves ... Self-care alone is not enough. You need to have self-awareness too. Self-care plus self-awareness equals self-love."

I subscribe to the values and practices of self-care, but with a skeptical eye. Being a recovering evangelical has made me wary of metanarratives. For me, practicing self-care means doing things like moving my body (usually by running along the river in Harrisburg!), drinking water, and cooking my lunches for the week on Sunday. Sometimes it means reading the news in a newspaper as opposed to on a screen, where I can get stuck in an endless loop. It means going to bed early.

I also know that self-care is subject to malpractice. Sometimes we evoke that term to avoid having to deal with changing a habit or avoiding follow through on a commitment. I think this is where a healthy dose of community involvement comes in. For me, advocating and struggling with my community has given me the "both/and" of practicing care inwardly and outwardly. It brings a kind of accountability that doesn't exist apart from community. And it gives me the chance to celebrate the radical and inspiring goodness of being queer and being part of a queer community while we try really hard to fix all of the bad stuff.

HEALTH & WELLNESS BRIEFS

Home alone?

From along the banks of Harrisburg's Susquehanna River, where many people find refuge from their homelessness under boxes and tattered blankets. Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit, Harrisburg, recently collected "Blessings Bags" from its congregation and the community-at-large. The bags contained travel size, personal care items. There are 1,741 homeless people in south central Pennsylvania, according to a 2015 report issued in June 2016 by the South Central PA Regional Housing Summit. By county: Lancaster – 378, Lebanon – 154, Perry – 165, York - 345 , Dauphin - 402, Cumberland – 180, Adams – 96, Franklin - 121.

HIV support group

Open Space Support Group is a closed support group for individuals living with HIV provided by Alder Health Services, Harrisburg and Lancaster. The group meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month, 4:30-5:30 p.m. Those interested in attending do not have to be enrolled in case management at Alder Health. For information, please contact Alder Health Services, 100 N. Cameron St., Ste. 201 East, Harrisburg, PA 17101-2412; Telephone: (717) 233-7190 ext. 223 or Hershey Medical Center 717-531-5850 for general questions.

AIDS library 30 yrs.

Begun in 1987 by activists Heshie Zinman and John Cunningham, the AIDS Library of Philadelphia was the nation's first library to provide HIV/AIDS information and to help combat society's fears about the epidemic. In stark contrast to the government's negligible response, LGBT communities nationwide provided information and rallied to develop social services, support research and demand action. This advocacy changed the course of the epidemic and societal attitudes toward gays and other people affected by HIV.

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At the center of it all

New executive director talks about LGBT Center

By Frank Pizzoli

Harrisburg's Amanda Arbour is on the job as executive director of the LGBT Center of Central PA.

On her first day, Sept. 11, *The Central Voice* sat down with the dynamic leader.

Arbour joins the center from her most recent work as the Racial Justice Program Coordinator at the YWCA Greater Harrisburg. A Messiah College graduate who studied sociology and politics, she is pursuing a Masters of Education degree in training and development at Penn State Harrisburg.

"I'm proud to be part of this diverse, vibrant and resilient community," Arbour said in an initial news release. "I look forward to working with the board of directors, staff, partners, donors and community members to continue providing the safe spaces, supportive services and educational programs for which the center has become known."

Arbour's experience includes serving as the Legislative Liaison for the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and Interim Coordinator of local community service at Messiah College's Agape Center for Service and Learning. She was named a 2017 Wonder Woman by *Harrisburg Magazine*.

Frank Pizzoli: What draws you to social justice work?

Amanda Arbour: It's been a passion of mine for a long time. I was informed by growing up in Philly. That's where I'm from. I saw a lot of injustice – poverty, racism, homophobia. Growing up in that context, and then studying sociology and politics, really gave me the academic foundation to inform and to understand the ways that oppression is systemic and is embedded throughout all of our society or institutions. These stereotypes and prejudices are things that we learn and have to actively seek to become aware of and unlearn.

FP: You're in the thick of it now...

AA: I've lived in Harrisburg over the past eight years on Allison Hill, a community that is marginalized in many different ways. There's a lot of stigma attached to living there. There's a lack of job opportunities, racism and discrimination against people who are undocumented or perceived to be undocumented. That experience has shown me many ways that injustices show up.

For five years at the Harrisburg YWCA, my focus has been on confronting racism as the Racial Justice Program Coordinator. It was really a learning experience for me as I got to work with a lot of people of color who were leaders in the community. And to hear more about their experiences and to see how can we work to educate others, particularly white people and people who hold a variety of different privileges about what that means. To come together to confront these various forms of oppression.

FP: There is Identity Politics and there is Policy Politics. By that I mean some people start with 'identity' and others start with 'policies' when engaging in the political life of their community. There is often tension between the two approaches when creating change.

AA: Can you define what you mean by identity politics?

FP: If we said, as a policy there shall be no hungry people in Harrisburg, then we can stop arguing over who's the hungriest according to their identity.

AA: We have to be careful about getting into the hierarchy of oppression debates. Arguments that say my oppression is worse than your oppression. That is counterproductive. But it is important to recognize that because there are different layers of oppression – racism, homophobia, transphobia, Islamophobia, xenophobia, economic classes - individuals who have many layers of oppression are further marginalized.

FP: And that's what you will add to the center's existing mission and programming?

AA: As part of my work here at the center I will be seeking to intentionally include those within our LGBTQ communities who are most marginalized. Our identities should drive our policies but there is a disconnect among those who are in positions of power and with more privileges. They don't necessarily have the lived experiences of those who experience a variety of oppressions. So, there can be a lack of understanding and a lack of a willingness to pursue social justice issues.

FP: We all need to work together?

AA: Yes. Certainly, I think it's pretty clear you're not suggesting that a policy should be more important than the people it hopes to help. Wherever we're coming from within or outside the LGBT community we can stand together with those who are experiencing marginalization.

FP: Help readers understand what you mean.

AA: For example, as a white gay woman who is cisgender, a U.S. citizen and a Christian, I experience sexism and heterosexism. But I don't have to worry about transphobia or xenophobia or Islamophobia or other forms of oppression. So, it's my responsibility to particularly listen to the experiences of others and to ensure that their voices are at the center of the conversations we have here at the Center.

FP: Central Voice convened a conversation like you mention with your predecessor, Louie Marven. We corralled people 18 to 70s and asked them two simple questions – What can you teach or learn from someone younger in the group? And, what can you teach or learn from someone older in the group? The conversation went on for two hours, nonstop.

AA: That's great. In my work over the past five years with the YWCA (as Racial Justice Program Coordinator), I've led a lot of similar discussions in which we all learn from one another.

FP: When we talk about white privilege it's important for me to recognize the ways in which I don't have to worry about a lot of things. No one follows me in a department store because they think I might steal something.

AA: When I'm talking to a group it's not about making anyone feel guilty or blaming anyone for things that are out of their control. It's about all of us taking responsibility that we do have these privileges. We need to be aware of them and use them in ways that stand for and with people of color.

FP: Try starting an LGBT newspaper on the Buckle of the Bible Belt. We've been covering intersectional topics since 2011, maybe longer. Too busy to count. Central Voice invited the Center, representatives of This Stops Today Harrisburg, Occupy Harrisburg, other related groups to a discussion we convened in a union conference room. They had never before been asked to convene as we did that evening.

AA: We could use a lot of that.

"I'm proud to be part of this diverse, vibrant and resilient community," said Amanda Arbour. She is the new executive director of the LGBT Center of Central PA. She spoke with The Central Voice editor and publisher Frank Pizzoli on her first day on the job.

What is the LGBT center

The LGBT Center of Central PA is a nonprofit organization based in Harrisburg and serves LGBTQ+ people and their allies throughout central Pennsylvania. The Center's programs and operations are supported annually by its members, individual and corporate donations, and an active grant-seeking process.

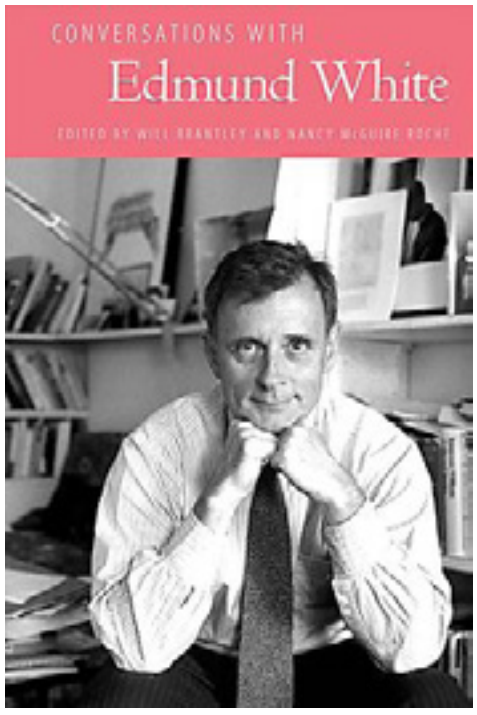
Projects affiliated with the Center include Common Roads, Aging with Pride, the LGBT History Project, the GSA Leadership Summit held annually at Dickinson College, and the Fall Achievement Benefit and fundraiser known as FAB. (*The Central Voice* has been a Media Sponsor of FAB for many consecutive years.)

The LGBT Center's Board of Directors – a 17-member group of individuals with backgrounds in the arts, business, academics, government, media and community involvement – began a search for its next director in July following the departure of Louie Marven, who stepped down from the post after more than five years at the helm. Pat Van Horn is the Operations Manager at the LGBT Center and Lindsay Lughes is the Center's Youth Programs Director.

If you are interested in learning more about the LGBT Center and its programs or in becoming a supporting member or a volunteer, please visit centralpalgbtcenter.org for details.

Interview collection explores Edmund White

The Central Voice's Frank Pizzoli's interview selected for book



By Central Voice

Called "his eminence grise" of gay male literature, Edmund White, 77, is now part of the well-respected "University of Mississippi Conversations with… " series.

A Broadway of bold face names – Norman Mailer, E.L. Doctorow, Tom Wolfe, Toni Morrison, Gore Vidal – the series is craftily edited by Will Brantley and Nancy McGuire Roche who selected 21 interviews. White has been formally interviewed more than 100 times, making selection a daunting task in order to properly reflect his life, times, and all the nuance over which readers will argue for years to come.

The Central Voice publisher and editor Frank Pizzoli's second White interview (2012) was selected for inclusion in the book.

Known for chronicling gay life, White is a novelist, memoirist, and an essayist on literary and social topics. Much of White's writing is on the theme of same-sex love. His 28 books include *The Joy of Gay Sex* (1977) (written with Charles Silverstein), his trio of autobiographic novels, *A Boy's Own Story* (1982), *The Beautiful Room Is Empty* (1988) and *The Farewell Symphony* (1997), *States of Desire: Travel in Gay America* (1980) and his biographies of Jean Genet, Arthur Rimbaud, and Marcel Proust.

The interviews range from a 1982 discussion of his early works to a new and unpublished interview conducted in 2016.

Pizzoli has interviewed White three times. One of those times was also with Andrew Holleran and Felice Picano. Holleran's Dancer from the Dance, a wildly successful 1978 gay novel still in print about gay men in New York City and Fire Island was published in the same year as White's Nocturnes for the King of Naples and Larry Kramer's Faggots. Dancer is regarded as a major contribution to post-Stonewall gay male literature. Kramer founded ACT UP in 1987 after having founded Gay Men's Health Crisis in 1981 in his living room across from Greenwich Village's Washington Square Park. Pizzoli, along with Rodger Beatty and many others, was instrumental in the early 80s in helping to establish what is today Alder Health Services (first operating as South Central AIDS Assistance Network, then AIDS Community Alliance). Beatty and he were hosting meetings in their living rooms in order to address the region's AIDS crisis.

"I've interviewed White in 2007, 2012, and in 2013 as one of the three surviving members of The Violet Quill, the cisgendered, white, gay male literary Mafia that reigned in the 80s," Pizzoli says. "We recorded the interview, almost 20,000 words." Pizzoli underscores, "No, they were not, and are not, the first and last word on everything gay or everything AIDS". White was in the initial group that formed Gay Men's Health Crisis. As Stonewall author Martin Duberman said in his first of two interviews with Pizzoli, when asked about the underreported role of women and minorities: "And thus far the history of those years is mostly focused on all those fine looking, upstanding white men, all of whom, except for Spencer Cox, survived. And why not? Everybody fights for his or her own life. Who can blame these guys? I don't blame them. It's just that they don't represent all of what was going on in those years of the early AIDS struggle." To which Pizzoli says, "Amen. I was there. I know who's been included and who's been excluded from AIDS history. We need to do better as the AIDS Canon moves forward."

Speaking of exclusions, "There's a delicious story from my third interview with Ed but I'm saving that one for a collection of interviews," Pizzoli says. Big name interviews – and he's done screeds of them, including Salman Rushdie, Joni Mitchell, Vickie Lawrence, John Waters (four times), Lipsinka, and iconic gay writers John Rechy, Christopher Bram – "are simple. You find out who's real, who's ridiculous. Most are real," he says.

White is real. "He's like a kid with a new toy when you show up at his NYC Chelsea flat to conduct your interview.

At the end of his first interview with White, Pizzoli included an end section he called "Meeting Edmund White."

The Central Voice publisher and editor Frank Pizzoli, right, has interviewed Edmund White, left, three times. His second interview (2012) was selected for inclusion in Conversations with Edmund White.

"Meeting Edmund White"

By Frank Pizzoli

Sometimes fate is kind. I'd wanted to interview Edmund White for some time, and wondered how to bring that about in an impromptu IM to Key West friend Chris Tittel, writer and playwright (*A Live and Lusty Matter, Mammy's Pantry, True North, about the Boy Scouts*, currently working on The Chip System). That was 2007, and Tittel answered that he was having dinner with White the next evening. He'd ask on my behalf. The dinner fell through, but not the interview (LLR, Summer 2007).

Although I'm not a starchy guy, I do rely on antiquated manners no longer taught. So off went a warm but respectfully formal email that White answered in less than 35 minutes. His simple lower case, one-line note contained a date, time, location, and kudos on my writer's resume. We were strangers.

While turning a corner in White's apartment building, not sure of my direction, he stuck his head out the door, beaming a huge smile. Once inside, he offered to make us a pot of tea with a blend sent from a friend he made while living in Paris. "And some dried fruit?" he asked. He made me feel like if I'd said, "No thanks, but how about a grilled cheese sandwich?" he'd have made me one and asked how dark I'd like the bread grilled.

I moved to his living room to set up a recorder, with him talking to me from the kitchen. His partner Michael scurried in and out with plastic baskets. "We're doing laundry today. If his passing through will be a bother, we can wait," White asked. It wasn't. When he brought out the tea and dried fruit and then sat down in his chair I realized he was just as excited as I was. My Q&A was next to me on the couch. White said he'd glanced at but hadn't read the questions. "I like these things to be fresh," he explained.

Fumbling with the recorder, I finally got it working. "I'm sitting here in the apartment of Edmund Wilson…" I said, and then froze. "We'd both be in trouble if that were true," White quipped and we both laughed. He is human and still very much alive unlike Wilson, an American critic and writer, who died in 1972.

Despite the lacerating criticisms he's endured—he's this, he's that; he's not this or not that; he's not every mother's dream, as if any one of us is. And who among us wouldn't want his writer's resume?

I can't possibly know if what he's written will endure. Neither can White. I am glad he wrote what he did, when he wrote whatever he wrote, especially his novels. That was my time, my city, in the many ways NYC was, and remains, for so many others. If journalism is the first draft of history, novels written while the clock ticks away on current events may be the second draft. As far as writing novels, I'm with Somerset Maugham: There's three rules to writing a novel but no one knows what they are.

Amazon.com: Conversations with Edmund White, University of Mississippi Press (2017), 208 pages, Introduction, Author Chronology, Index; Paper $25.00, Printed Case binding, $85

Reading, Pa. inspires play: Rust Belt

By Peter Rugh & Jamara Wakefield
The Indypendent

Reprinted with permission

Hillary Clinton called them a "basket of deplorables." *The National Review's* Kevin Williamson took an "honest look" at their "welfare dependency," addictions and "family anarchy" and came to the "awful realization" that these "dysfunctional, downscale communities… deserve to die." Pundits first ignored and later chastised Rust Belt voters, particularly the now infamous "white working class." Playwright Lynn Nottage took a novel approach: She listened to them.

Inspired by Occupy Wall Street's popular rage against wealth inequality, Nottage began conducting extensive interviews with residents of Reading, Pennsylvania in 2011 — once a thriving industrial hub and today one of the poorest cities in America. The result of two and a half years Nottage spent in the field is Sweat, up for three Tony's this month, including Best Play. Sweat doesn't focus solely on white workers but it does illuminate the complexities of the Trump era, saying as much about why Black and Latino voters stayed home in November as why whites mobilized for Trump. It tells the story of a multi-racial working class grappling with the impacts of automation and globalization; of workers striving for the American Dream in an economy in which they are an afterthought.

"What the fuck is NAFTA?," barks Tracy (Johanna Day), a dyed-in-the-wool Reading native whose German grandfather helped construct many of the now boarded-up buildings that comprise the city's downtown. "Sounds like a laxative."

The line, uttered early in the first act, foreshadows events to come, as friendships and familial bonds between the characters are tested and, in many ways, broken by forces beyond their control or understanding.

John Lee Beatty serves as Sweat's set designer, creating a beautiful rotating set that is often turned to the homey dive bar where most of the play's action takes place. It is here that Sweat's blue-collar characters gather to celebrate birthdays, blow off steam, dream of vacations that never materialize, gripe about the news and settle their differences. The play

Please see **RUST BELT**, page **18**

DEINDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION: Michelle Wilson as Cynthia and James Colby as Stan in Lynn Nottage's Tony-nominated play about a working class fighting to survive. Credit: Joan Marcus. Credit: Joan Marcus.

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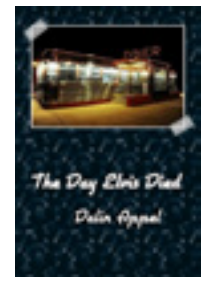
For more info, please visit

WWW.MARKETOFCURIOSITIES.COM

The Day Elvis Died

Poetry collection by Lancaster native Dalin Appel



Dalin Appel has written three plays and two books of poetry. He started writing poetry in high school. He has volunteering experience working in crisis situations on a suicide hotline as well as working as a group leader with the mentally ill at CSG. He is currently volunteering at a vocational program. He was born and raised in Lancaster County. *Available at www.amazon.com*

Black and Blue

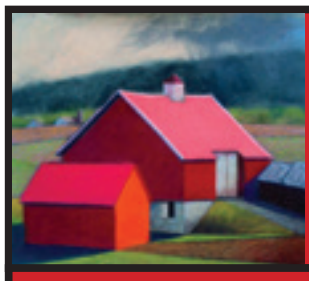
Weary and scared
Lying on the bed
Last night's screams
Still fill my head
My skin is battered
Black and blue
He says he doesn't love me
This is true
Face in the pillow
Crying in shame
If I was not so stupid
It would not be the same
It has all happened before
And it all will happen again
Were things ever different
Were we really ever in love
I remember when we made love for the first time
After the senior prom
But that was so long ago
Too long to care
Make the coffee
Before he awakes
Get out of bed
But I don't dare wake him
He is still asleep
A sore bruise
Big on my shoulder
No one could love me
So why should he try
Feel the blood
Rush to my feet
Catch myself
Before I fall
Downstairs now
To make his meal
My body aches
The pain I can't conceal
If I were lovable
He would not be this way

Junkie

I awoke bathed in a cold sweat
Shaking
I vomited on myself as I put my feet onto the floor
I slowly stood
Afraid I would faint
I stripped and pulled on a pair of old smelly blue jeans
Sweaty and stained with mustard
I got from the dirty wash pile on the floor
I throw the vomited on jeans on the dirty wash pile
I knew I had to get out of there
It was a cold winter night
Complicated by pockets of low hanging clouds
Where was that tape
The one and only tape
With which I could face that night
I scooped it up from the dresser,
I held it in my arms,
Like a baby
I opened up my door.
The cold night air filled my lungs and shook my senses awake
I checked my pocket for my keys as I walked out of my apartment.
I grabbed my keys out of my pocket and opened the car door
It felt like an iceberg inside the car
I turned the car engine over,
I popped the tape into the machine
That familiar lonesome harmonica sound filled the car
Bruce Springsteen started singing
"I saw her standn' on her front lawn
just twirlin' her button"
I turned on the heat
I closed my eyes and prayed to God that somehow I could get through the night
I drove toward the city as the music blared
Clutching the steering wheel for dear life
I left my mind and become one with the car
Until I got to the street corner
The one that I knew as well as my apartment.
The young man came over to me
"I knew you would come"
He handed me a small bag of white powder
I handed him a wad of bills and drove off to the park
I parked in a deserted parking lot near a light
I opened the glove compartment and found my kit
My heart starts to pound
I placed the box on my lap
And opened it
I closed my eyes and pulled out my spoon
I opened the baggie and scooped out the white powder
I dropped the baggie and slipped an old red lighter out of my pocket
I heated the powder in the spoon
And it melted into a liquid
I took my needle out of the kit
And carefully drew the liquid out of the spoon
I closed my eyes
And felt the prick of a needle into a vein
A wave of warmth passes through my body
And I float into my own heavenly realm

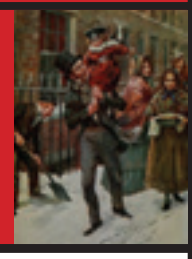
AAH Events

Visit www.ArtAssocOfHbg.com
for more information & reservations



Dec. 1st-Jan. 4th
"Linear Juxtapositions" featuring: sculptures, pastels, mixed media, drawings & photographs. Opening reception Fri., Dec. 1st, 5-8 pm, music by Orange House Quartet.

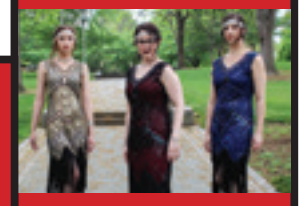
Sat., Dec. 9th, 5-8 pm:
"A Dickens Holiday Soirée"
Private Home In New Cumberland
$50 IN ADVANCE;
$55 AT THE DOOR



Mark Your Calendars
for the March 10th Bal Masque – "Celtic Ceilidh" at Harrisburg Midtown Arts Centre!

Through Nov. 22nd:
Five-Artist Invitational Exhibition

Nov. 19th, 2 pm:
Concert by "Two Beat Dames" of the Kayla Keating Jazz Orchestra
$10 DONATION



Sun., Dec. 3rd, 1-3 pm:
"Christmas Tea" in AAH Main Gallery
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One fabulous night in Harrisburg

The LGBT Community Center, Harrisburg, has announced the 2017 FAB Award Honorees.

The Honoress - Mara Keisling, Dickinson College, and Adanjesús Marín – will be recognized Nov. 3. Don't forget to purchase your reservation for this year's One FAB Night to celebrate these incredible individuals and organizations.

The Central Voice is a Media Sponsor of the event.

Mara Keisling

Mara Keisling is the Executive Director of the National Center for Transgender Equality, the nation's leading social justice advocacy organization winning life-saving change for transgender people. Since founding NCTE in 2003, Mara has led organizational and coalition efforts that have won significant advances in transgender equality, including the inclusion of gender identity in the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, the first-ever Congressional hearing on transgender issues, and countless federal administrative and state-level wins.

As one of the nation's leading voices for transgender equality, Mara is regularly quoted in national and local print media and has appeared on major television networks, including CNN, MSNBC, and Fox News. She was part of the first all-transgender television interview on Melissa Harris-Perry's show in 2012. Ms. Magazine named Mara one of «45 Feminist Women to Follow on Twitter" in August 2017.

A proud Pennsylvania native, Mara holds a BSS from Pennsylvania State University and did her graduate work in American Government at Harvard University. Prior to founding NCTE, Mara worked for 25 years in social marketing and opinion research.

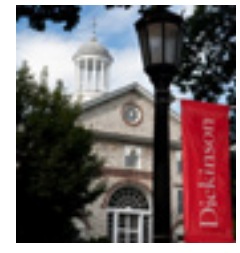
Adanjesús Marín

Adanjesús Marín is a skilled community organizer and leader known for his intersectional work across many different social justice movements. For over 20 years he worked in the labor movement, organizing workers all across the country from school janitors and bus drivers to farmworkers and college professors.

Soon after moving to Lancaster City in 2009, Adan founded the LGBT Organizing Committee and served as Chair of the Lancaster City Human Relations Commission. During an attempt to abolish the Commission he organized and led the Lancaster Committee to Defend Civil Rights, which became one of the largest and broadest civil rights coalitions in Lancaster's history. Adan also served as President of Equality Pennsylvania during the marriage equality victory and the election of the first out State Representative. He was recently elected Co-Chair of Pennsylvania Pride at Work, the AFLCIO LGBTQ constituency group.

Adan is currently the Director of Make the Road PA, a Latinx organization working for justice through organizing and building community leadership. His work there includes advocating for immigration reform, fighting to shut down the Berks Family Detention Center, pushing for a $15 minimum wage and workers' rights.

Dickinson College



Dickinson College has been a dedicated partner of the LGBT Center of Central PA for nearly a decade. This partnership began with the Center's 2nd Annual GSA Leadership Summit in 2009, which Dickinson not only graciously hosted on their campus but also helped to plan. The College has not only continued to host the Summit each year but has also been an integral part of the planning process. Since that time, the Summit has grown from a 1-day to a 3-day event, with 550 students and advisors participating in this year's 10th anniversary summit. Erica Lawrence, Director of the Office of LGBTQ Services at Dickinson College, has been an incredible support to the Center as part of the planning committee.

Dickinson has also been an essential partner on the LGBT Center's History Project from its inception in 2012. Retired Dickinson professor Lonna Malmsheimer provided training and equipment to begin the process of recording oral history interviews, and from there the partnership was extended to the Archives & Special Collections Department to catalog and store historical items donated to the History Project. Because of this collaboration the History Project was awarded the prestigious J. Franklin Jameson Award for Archival Advocacy from the Society of American Archives. Malinda Triller-Doran, Special Collections Librarian, has been an integral part of the project since its start and regularly donates her own time to time to the project.

Live performances slated for November and December

COURT STREET CABARET
Jukebox Edition | **November 3 & 4, 2017**
Unsung Edition | **January 12 & 13, 2018**
Miscast Edition | **May 11 & 12, 2018**
Open State of Harrisburg
An evening of tunes from Broadway and beyond! The gang is back for three rousing renditions of Harrisburg's favorite night of song! The best of Broadway and beyond - old and new favorites are sure to please your ears and leave your toes tapping! For assistance, call the box office at 717-232-6736.

Whitaker Center Presents
HARRISBURG STORY SLAM
@ Harrisburg Hilton

HARRISBURG STORY SLAM
November 8
Whitaker Center
If you like telling stories, hearing stories, or just fun in general, you will definitely want to check out Whitaker Center's Story Slam at the Hilton's Hill Society! A Story Slam is a great excuse for anyone 21+ to get on stage and tell the crowd one of their favorites. In November, the top two winners from the Story Slams in July-October will descend upon the Hilton for the ultimate throw down- the Grand Slam! Tickets are required for both performers and spectators. This event is strictly 21+. Tickets are $10 at the door (cash only). This event is generously sponsored by the Harrisburg Hilton. To get to the Hill Society room, enter through the main lobby on 2nd Street and make a left. Tickets: 717-214-ARTS (2787)

A CHRISTMAS STORY THE MUSICAL

A CHRISTMAS STORY
November 14 - December 31
Fulton Theatre
It's not sugarplums dancing in Ralphie's head; it's a Red Ryder air rifle! Bundled with your favorite film moments, fans will rejoice as they relive the triple-dog-dare flag pole incident, the worst Christmas present ever (pink bunny pajamas) and the FRA-GEE-LAY top prize (leg lamp). A Christmas Story, The Musical hits the bullseye for holiday family fun! Purchased at Theatre, by calling 717-397-7425, or online.

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE sunderman CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE SYMPHONY
December 1
Majestic Theatre,
Gettysburg College
The Gettysburg College Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Vimbayi Kaziboni, forms the core of the orchestral program at the Sunderman Conservatory at Gettysburg College. The orchestra performs a wide variety of works that reflect both the high-performance standards at the Sunderman Conservatory and the orchestra's place within the broader liberal arts community of Gettysburg College. The ensemble is committed to providing a platform for both student and faculty soloists at the Sunderman Conservatory. Student soloists are selected through the annual Sunderman Conservatory Concerto Competition. Additionally, the College Symphony Orchestra is dedicated to performing new music, including world premieres. Info: 717-337-8200; boxofficeinfo@gettysburg.edu

THE WIZARD OF OZ
December 7–23
Ephrata Performing Arts Center
Sharadin Bigler Theatre
The Wizard of Oz has become a yearly holiday tradition, and we are happy to present his timeless classic for the entire family on our Mainstage. Join Dorothy, Scarecrow, Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion as they follow the yellow brick road to help get Dorothy back home again. We can all relive our first childhood fantasy as we journey through Oz, where things are strange but beautiful. EPAC is watching the hourglass, waiting until we can share this gift with you.
Tickets can be at 717-733-7966 x 1.

SCOTTY MCCREERY
December 16
The Appell Center
American Idol winner Scotty McCreery burst onto the national music scene in 2011 at age 17, quickly establishing himself as one of country music's hottest new stars. Now in his early twenties, the talented singer/songwriter has album sales approaching 3 million, and received both Platinum and Gold album certifications, debuted three consecutive albums at No. 1 on a Billboard chart, and achieved one Gold and three Platinum-certified singles as well as two Top Ten hits.

DOCTOR: LGBT-friendly resource From page 1

promising medical innovation.

CV: And you formed a team that night?

PW: No. We came away disappointed that we were unable to find an exciting project. That bonded us. Despite protests from competition organizers, we went rogue and formed a team of only medical students. We started from scratch.

CV: Where does the gay angle come in?

PW: Each of us has different motivations for wanting to help end LGBTQ+ health disparities. And we want make positive change in medicine that reflects our passion for social justice and equity in healthcare. The gay population has been underserved in medicine for too long.

CV: What is culturally competent LGBT care?

PW: The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender population is incredibly diverse. Each subgroup has different healthcare needs. Even within each subgroup, the population is incredibly diverse coming from every possible social, cultural, and geographic background imaginable. But all of these groups have a shared history of being mistreated in healthcare, either through overt discrimination or a general lack of understanding of the unique needs of this community even among well-meaning providers.

We define culturally competent care through two related yet separate metrics: LGBTQ+ friendliness and LGBTQ+ competence. First, being friendly means a medical practice is welcoming, treating patients with dignity and respect. Second, being competent as in having skills and knowledge necessary to meet the unique needs of sexual and gender minorities. Each provider's SpectrumScore serves as an indicator of abilities to provide culturally competent care.

CV: Did you receive LGBT-sensitive instruction in medical school?

PW: Univ. of Penn is a leading institution in caring for LGBTQ+ patients. They offer formal instruction as a "hidden curriculum" which, among other things, incorporates LGBTQ+ standardized patients into our Introduction to Clinical Medicine course.

However, the situation at other medical schools is significantly worse, and a 2011 article published in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that medical schools spent an average of 5 hours on LGBTQ-targeted training. This simply is not enough time to even scratch the surface of what it takes to treat these patients.

Info: Facebook or e-mail SpectrumScores@gmail.com

RUST BELT: Reading, Pa. inspires play

From page 13

moves back and forth between the year 2000, when one-by-one Reading's employers are shipping production abroad, and the dawning of the 2008 financial crisis. During set changes, archival news footage flashes across the stage, marking the passage of time but also hinting at the events beyond the bar that are shaping the drama in otherwise hidden ways.

The characters in *Sweat* admirably attempt to better their station, or at least hold on to the scraps of the American Dream they already possess, as the town around them crumbles.

Steelworker Tracey and bartender Stan (James Colby) recount the hard-working lives of their European ancestors who, like them, stood on the manufacturing line. Injury forced Stan behind the bar counter, while Tracy is fighting to preserve her union as rumors of a lockout begin to spread. Her best friend, Cynthia (Michelle Wilson), dreams of surpassing racial and gender barriers at the factory by becoming a supervisor.

Carlo Alban delivers what is perhaps the most tender and heart-wrenching of performances in this work as Oscar, the saloon's bar back. A Spanish-speaking outsider who lacks the connections to receive a union card, Oscar has been wiping down tables and gathering empty beer mugs for years without a raise. When an opportunity to cross the factory's picket line and earn a higher wage eventually materializes, he leaps at the chance.

As the steel company begins to lay off employees, when their pensions are obliterated and their unions wither, rifts ensue between the characters that take the shape of violent prejudice but which are clearly rooted in desperation.

During the play's intermission, in true New York theater fashion, we chatted with our neighbors seated next to us. One insisted the characters represented Trump voters.

There is a cathartic comfort in having someone to blame for the Trump presidency. But Nottage reminds us that capitalism — shown here in its post-millennial, neoliberal incarnation — is the real culprit behind the bomb that shattered our ballot boxes. Loyal to no one, it carves racial and ethnic lines through the working class and forces its members to compete against one another, or worse, against nameless, unseen workers across borderlines who are desperate enough to be exploited for even less.

Sweat does not give the impression that America will be great again or that it ever was for many of its inhabitants. It hocks no magical elixir for the downwardly mobile working class. Perhaps to a fault, Nottage's characters lack a sense of collective agency present in working-class dramas of bygone eras, such as *Waiting for Lefty*, which, while tragic, highlighted rank-and-file power on the shop floor. But we live in different times. *Sweat* takes the consequences of sweeping trade and economic policies crafted by liberal and conservative administrations alike and portrays their consequences on a human scale. Toward the end of the play, news footage of the 2008 bank bailouts flashes over the stage. It begs the question: When will the people of the Rust Belt receive theirs?

Books you can snuggle with

Dauphin County Library Book Reviews

By Yvonne Carmichael

Whether it's titles for an upcoming vacation, the holidays or the long days of winter, snuggle up with some of these titles.

A Place Called Winter
by Patrick Gale
"Forced to abandon his wife and child, Harry Cane signs up for emigration to the newly colonized Canadian prairies. Remote and unforgiving, his allotted homestead in a place called Winter is a world away from the golden suburbs of turn-of-the-century Edwardian England. And yet it is here, isolated in a seemingly harsh landscape, under the threat of war, madness and an evil man of undeniable magnetism that the fight for survival will reveal in Harry an inner strength and capacity for love beyond anything he has ever known before. In this exquisite journey of self-discovery, loosely based on a real-life family mystery, Patrick Gale has created an epic, intimate human drama, both brutal and breathtaking. It is a novel of secrets, sexuality and, ultimately, of great love.»--Page [4] of cover.

Femme
by Mette Bach
"Academics have never been Sofie's strong point; she's too busy spending all of her free time with her boyfriend, Paul, the captain of her Surrey high school's soccer team. When her English teacher implements a new program that pairs her with straight-A student Clea, Sofie worries about how Paul will react to her hanging out with the only out lesbian at school. Sofie is as surprised as Paul at how close she and Clea quickly become. When Sofie discovers that Clea is planning a road trip to check out some American colleges over the winter break, she invites herself along, causing more issues with Paul. But it's only after a college student asks if Sofie identifies as a "femme" lesbian that she starts to question her own sexuality and her relationship with both Clea and Paul.".—From the publisher.

Got Mistletoe
by Andi Anderson
"Blake Roberts just wants to buy some wrapping paper and go home. That changes when he's surprised by a supercenter employee keeping the Christmas spirit alive by singing and doing some impromptu dance moves. Ryan Jolly is bouncy and a little flamboyant, and Blake is immediately smitten with him. Despite being total opposites, Blake's heart is captured by Ryan's bubbly personality and sweet smile, and when attraction flares between them, Blake starts to hope his new Christmas wish--to spend more than the holiday with Ryan--might come true."—From the publisher

Icecapade
by Josh Lanyon
On the eve of the new millennium, diamond thief Noel Snow seduced FBI special agent Robert Cuffe, then fled into the dawn. Now a successful novelist, Noel uses his capers as fodder for his books, and has modeled his hero's nemesis (and potential love interest) on Cuffe. Though he leaves Robert a drunken phone message every New Year's Eve, Noel hasn't seen or heard from him in a decade. So he's thrilled when his former lover shows up at his upstate farm one Christmas Eve. Elation quickly turns to alarm when Robert accuses Noel of being responsible for a recent rash of diamond heists of which he is innocent."—From publisher

My Best Friend, Maybe
by Caela Carter
"Colette's life is near-perfect, if boring, so when her ex-best friend, Sadie, asks her to come on vacation to the Greek Islands for a family wedding, Colette agrees but is surprised to learn Sadie's true reason for the invitation."—From the publisher

Take me Home: A Belladonna Ink novella
by Lorelie Brown
Thanksgiving arrives in one week and one day. Feeling hemmed in by parental expectations? Are they disappointed by your sapphic proclivities? I can help! The only pay I want is the holiday meal! So reads the Craiglist add. Keighley didn't know what she was looking for, but when she invites Brooke to come visit over the Thanksgiving holidays, she turns out to be cuter and more complicated than expected.

What do Muslims believe?

Do you have questions about Islam? Want to know more about your Muslim neighbors? Looking for a great way to discuss one of the hottest topics in the world right now?

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community of York/Harrisburg/Central PA is hosting "Coffee, Cake and True Islam" meetups to inform the public about the true teachings and practical benefits of the Religion of Islam every Friday from 6 – 7 PM at The Midtown Scholar Bookstore Harrisburg The meetups are free and open to the public, including coffee and fresh baked goods.

For more information, please call 717.300.0591 or email Chris at tabligh.yrk@ahmadiyya.us.

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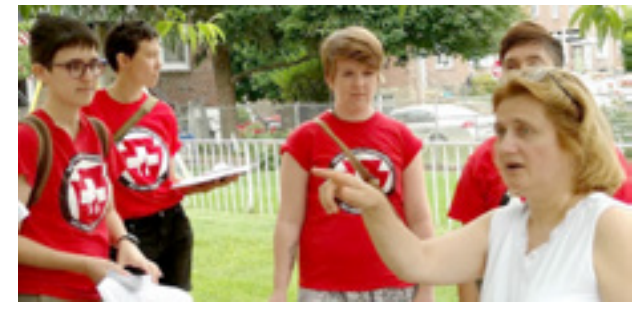
OUT & ABOUT

COMMUNITY EVENTS HELD AROUND THE STATE

Put People First PA have attended many town hall meetings on health care convened by elected officials.



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MARIJUANA: Long term revenue solution

From page 5

might help prevent some people from getting addicted to prescription painkillers and entering the potentially deadly spiral of opioid addiction. For these Pennsylvanians, marijuana could be a much safer way to treat severe pain.

Nationwide, support for regulating and taxing marijuana continues to rise. Eight states — Alaska, California, Colorado, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, Oregon, Washington — and the District of Columbia have all legalized marijuana in recent years. Other states are considering it, including our neighbors Delaware, New Jersey, and Maryland.

The latest Quinnipiac poll released in August showed 61 percent of Americans agree “the use of marijuana should be made legal in the United States.” That is up from 59 percent earlier this year and up 10 points in the last five years.

Let’s take a look at the Colorado experience.

Last year, Colorado — with less than half the population of Pennsylvania — brought in $129 million in tax revenue on $1 billion in marijuana sales from the new industry that had already created an estimated 18,000 jobs.

After regulating and taxing marijuana, the total number of marijuana arrests in Colorado decreased by nearly half between 2012 and 2014, from nearly 13,000 arrests to 7,000 arrests.

Pennsylvania has already benefited by some cities’ decriminalizing marijuana.

In Philadelphia, marijuana arrests dropped from 2,843 in 2014 to 969 in 2016. Based on a recent study, the Rand Corp. estimated the cost for each marijuana arrest and prosecution is approximately $2,200. Using those figures, that’s a savings of more than $4.1 million in one Pennsylvania city.

By comparison, in 2015, York, Dauphin, Chester, Delaware, Bucks, and Montgomery Counties each had more arrests for small amounts of marijuana than Philadelphia.

Obviously, regulating and taxing marijuana is not something to enter into lightly. Should Pennsylvania join the growing number of states benefiting financially and socially from this industry, there are many important issues to consider, including details about age limits, strict regulatory oversight, licensing, growing policies, sale and use locations, and possession limits.

It is time for this commonwealth to seriously consider this opportunity to generate hundreds of millions of dollars in new revenue, create more jobs, and help prevent thousands of people from financial and personal pain and ruin because they were caught with a joint.

Eugene DePasquale is the auditor general of Pennsylvania.

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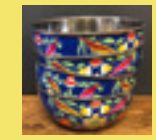

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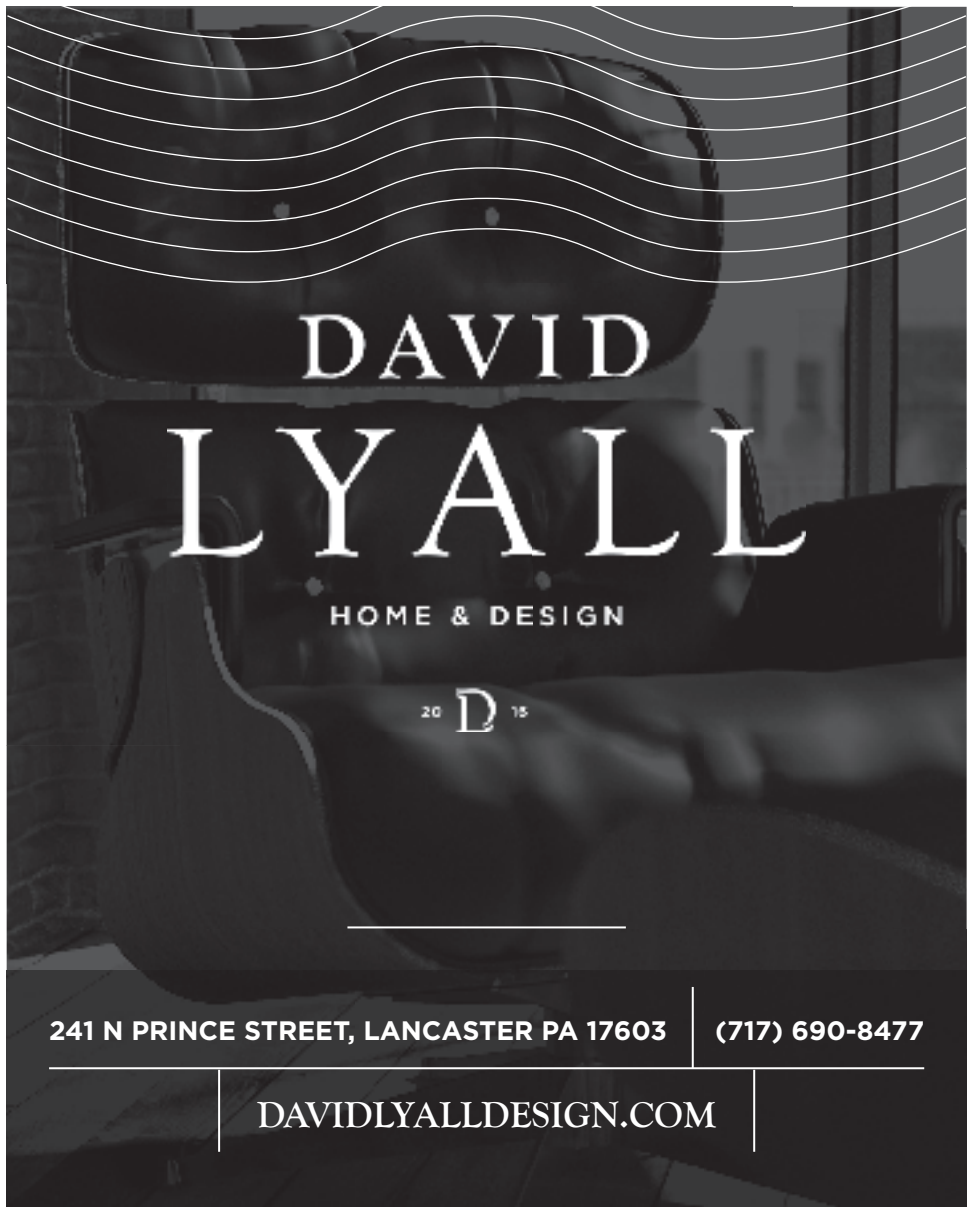

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Empowerment

Making Sense of Life

By Dr. Terry Drew Karanen

Our five-part series this year on self-care continues with a subject that has enjoyed increasing popularity in recent years. The topic is empowerment. The importance of self-esteem, and the lack of it that is so prevalent in the LGBTQ communities, is an matter from a previous column. In this issue we will build on the concept of self-esteem, the love and appreciation of oneself, and enlarge on it.

As with many concerns that become widespread over time, empowerment has turned into a buzz word. In doing so the subject loses some of its muscle. Women, minorities, and other historically marginalized groups, like the LGBTQ communities, are urged to empowerment themselves and the groups that advocate on their behalf. The problem is that empowerment is too often talked about without any practical direction on how to make it a part of our lives.

Traditionally empowerment had to do with some type of authority – such as a government, a boss or supervisor, or in traditional marriage, the husband – granting power to a subordinate. It is this original idea that can get in the way of feeling empowered in our own lives.

We see this same definition applied in business as well as in assisting communities that are in need. In these cases the employees or communities are empowered by others to care aaboutt a cause. Employees are given the training and tools to perform their duties in new, more effective ways. For communities, people may be taught basic principles, such as sanitation, family dynamics, or how to start a business.

This type of encouragement assists people to find hope in their own abilities to perform their duties or build a better life. With new skills and ideas the individuals or group have new appreciation of their own talents; they feel empowered, more confident; and, thus their self-esteem gets a tremendous boost. In many cases, people and communities that receive this kind of assistance are receiving encouragement of this magnitude for the very first time in their lives.

There is another way to experience empowerment, one that does not require the presence of others. That is the empowerment we generate from within. To do this, of course, we have to possess at least some self-esteem, and a quantity of admission, no matter how small, that we and our skills are valuable. How can we develop this type of self-empowerment?

There are three ways that can be identified as: Stop – Start – Bask!

First, we must STOP criticizing, analyzing and categorizing every little thing we do. People who fail at businesses or relationships are at least trying to build something. There are, however, women and men of all sexual orientations and persuasions who are so terrified at making a mistake they stay in the same nowhere job or relationship for years. They lack the inner power to make change, primarily because they are terrified of making a mistake. We're human. We screw up. Get over it. STOP IT!

Second, we can START praising ourselves. Yep! That could mean some of those crazy mirror work exercises where you look your beautiful face in the mirror and say aloud that you are magnificent! "Yeah, right …" some might remark. I know. It may sound hokey and maybe a little inane, but to sincerely appreciate our reflection is to be willing to accept a compliment from the most important person in the world – us!

Our work, the way we dress, and the difference we make in the lives of others are also reflections of who we are as individuals on planet Earth. If you have difficulty with this, think about how you accept compliments from others. Do you shrug them off? Do you laugh and then make fun of yourself with a self-deprecating remark? The best response we can give to a compliment is two simple, sincerely-spoken words: "Thank you!"

Finally, we could all use a little more experience with how to BASK in the greatness of our accomplishments. For example, I was so intent on starting grad school I barely remember getting my undergrad degree, which was a pretty hard process for me for a variety of reasons. This is not about being haughty, obsessed with ourselves, or prideful. It's about acknowledging our self-worth. This step is important because it allows us to empowering ourselves onto the next step on our path, whether that's a new career, a relationship, getting in shape, or paying off our debts.

Take time today to encourage yourself the way you'd help out a friend who was in need of a confidence boost. You will be, of course, helping your best friend – YOU!

Terry is an author, speaker, licensed social worker and flight attendant. Read his weekly blog at Central Voice online. He is also the director of Spirit, Mind and Body Foundation (spiritmindbodyfoundation.org).

Bradbury-Sullivan Center hosts Cyber Center

In efforts to continuously meet demonstrated service gaps in the LGBT community, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center recently converted previously unused space on its third floor to be used as a Cyber Center.

The space conversion occurred with support from the PPL Foundation and the PowerOn Program.

The Cyber Center at Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center will make it possible for the organization to offer resume clinics, healthcare and Medicare enrollment assistance, youth writing workshops, and computer classes for older adults, as well as drop-in internet access for youth through The Center's daily youth program, Project SILK Lehigh Valley.

PowerOn is a national program developed to support LGBTQ individuals gain access to technology and the Internet who otherwise may not have access. The PowerOn program is supported nationally by Straight But Not Narrow, Human I-T, The Trevor Project and operated fiscally by the LGBT Technology Institute.

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center provides arts, culture, health, and youth programs to strengthen and support the LGBT community across the Greater Lehigh Valley.

Your voices and actions worked for Census count

Late last month, the US Census Bureau announced that it planned to remove a proposed question about sexual orientation from their national survey, the Census Barriers, Attitudes and Motivators Study (CBAMS).

The National LGBTQ Task Force discovered this was happening and immediately notified colleague organizations, sent out an action alert, and mobilized people nationwide to take a stand against government discrimination - and for counting us in ther US Census. And it worked!

YOUR voices and actions pressured them to reverse their decision. LGBT people will be counted. The National LGBTQ Task Force annually organizes Creating Change, the premiere activist and advocate venue.

Lehigh Valley Center and Lehigh Pride join forces

The Boards of Directors of the Lehigh Valley's two leading LGBT cultural organizations, Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center and Pride of the Greater Lehigh Valley, have unanimously expressed intent to merge in the long term interest of the LGBT community in the region.

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center provides arts, health, and youth programs for the LGBT community across seven counties in Eastern Pennsylvania. Headquartered in its downtown Allentown community center, which currently employs 5 full-time and 3 part-time employees. Pride of the Greater Lehigh Valley has produced Allentown's annual Pride in the Park Festival for 24 years and is an all-volunteer organization.

The terms of the merger maintain the leadership structure of Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, but add a volunteer-composed Pride Festival Planning Committee which will work with Center staff to produce the annual festival.

Shawn Bausher, President of Pride of the Greater Lehigh Valley, stated, "As our Board of Directors considered the upcoming 25th year of Pride in the Park, we wanted to be sure the festival could continue well into the future. This proposed merger will add professional staffing to support the festival and will also lead to more resources for our community by cutting out duplicative administrative costs between the two organizations. Our Board is very enthusiastic about this proposed merger. Our current board leaders plan to continue to stay involved with festival planning through the Pride Festival Planning Committee at Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center and we are grateful that The Center is willing to take this on."

Adrian Shanker, Executive Director of Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, stated: "Our organization also started as an all-volunteer organization, so we understand how all-consuming it is for volunteer leaders to manage a non-profit, let alone produce an annual festival. We look forward to continuing to work with volunteers to produce an annual LGBT pride festival and we hope that through this merger, the festival can be stronger than ever before."

Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center (www.bradburysullivancenter.org) provides arts, health, and youth programs for the LGBT community across the Greater Lehigh Valley.

Pride of the Greater Lehigh Valley (www.prideglv.org) produces Allentown's annual Pride in the Park festival.

Will PA Dems revisit hate crime laws?

The violence at the white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia that left three people dead and dozens injured has renewed the call by Democratic Pennsylvania lawmakers for tougher hate crime laws in the Keystone State, WITF reports.

"We can make a statement here in Pennsylvania saying that we reject this kind of hatred, these kind of groups who target minorities, who target people on the basis of their religion, their ancestry, their sexual orientation and gender identity, which were all on display in Charlottesville," said House Democratic Caucus Chair Dan Frankel.

According to PhillyMag.com, Pennsylvania's hate crime laws currently lack protections for LGBTQ citizens, meaning crimes committed in the state based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression cannot be charged as hate crimes.

Most famously, the trio of Kathryn Knott, Philip Williams and Kevin Harrigan, who were found guilty of the 2014 brutal beating of a pair of gay men in Philadelphia, were not charged with assault as a hate crime as no such protections for LGBTQ people exists in the state.

Pennsylvania is the only state in the Northeast that does not cover violence against LGBTQ people in its hate crime laws.

However, in order to amend the laws, the Republican-controlled legislature needs to bring up the matter for a vote. WITF notes that according to Frankel, bipartisan support for the current proposals is meager.

He's calling on Republican leaders to bring the legislation up for a vote.

"That would protect our citizens, I think and make a statement to the rest of the country that we aren't going to tolerate this," Frankel said.

Local Transgender Day of Remembrance

Trans Central PA Topics

By Joanne Carroll

Newtown, Orlando, Charleston, San Bernardino, Aurora, Las Vegas and more are names of communities that conjure up horrific events. When these senseless killings take place, we are riveted to our televisions and smart phones.

What about the tragedies that took place in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Waxahachie, and Ithaca? What you never heard about them? Senseless killings took place in these communities and nearly 20 more.

The difference was in the body count, because these homicides were perpetrated against one individual at a time. You see, the murders of transgender persons seldom make the news and their news of their deaths are often relinquished to the dustbin of history.

However, the impact of these hate-derived killings is something that those of us that identify as transgender feel deep in our souls. These are our sisters and brothers, and could easily be one of us, all because the motives of the murderers were likely rooted in transphobia.

To create a sense of awareness and to be sure that trans murders do not go unnoticed, communities around the world on Nov. 20 each conduct a memorial to those transgender persons lost in the preceding 12 months.

The event is universally observed under the title of the Transgender Day of Remembrance. It has been observed in Harrisburg on the Capitol Steps for countless years as TransCentralPA along with its community partners and friends join in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Official Observance.

The event for 2017 will once again be held on the steps of the State Capitol in Harrisburg Mon., Nov. 20, 5:30 p.m.

Several guest speakers will offer remarks and those attending will be afforded a chance to light a candle and read aloud the names of the deceased.

Please join TransCentralPA as we make sure these deaths do not go unnoticed.

Joanne Carroll is the President of TransCentral PA. TransCentral PA is committed to providing advocacy and caring support for transgender individuals, their significant others, families, friends and allies.

Trump science nominee Sam Clovis:

‘Gay marriage will lead to legalized pedophilia’

Dead State’s Sky Palma reports that according to a CNN review of his writings, speeches, and radio broadcasts, President Trump’s pick for the top science post at the Department of Agriculture has argued that being gay is a choice and marriage equality will lead to the legalization of pedophilia.

Between 2012 and 2014, Sam Clovis made the comments during his time as a radio show host and political activist. Senate Democrats have slammed his nomination for the USDA due to his lack of background in any kind of science.

The American Psychological Association has declared that while there is no consensus on the cause of homosexuality, it’s clear that humans have “little or no sense of choice about their sexual orientation.”

Writing in an op-ed for a conservative blog back in 2011, Clovis argued that since the science surrounding the origins of LGBT people is unsettled, they’re not eligible for 14th Amendment protections.

“Today, there are six protected classes of American citizens who benefit from the history of legal precedents associated with American traditions and the 14th Amendment,” Clovis wrote. “Two of these classes—religion and military—have long been established in the traditions of the nation. The other four—race, gender, disability and age—are based on primary characteristics. Primary characteristics are those human features we can generally discern by visual examination—something we can see. Following this logic, the only way to extend 14th Amendment protections to those in the LGBT lifestyles is if these behaviors are genetically mapped or otherwise discernible.”

“The science on this issue seems to be uncertain,” he continued. “and if one followed the arguments from plaintiffs, the issue argued was that these individuals, because of ‘love,’ should be allowed to ‘marry just like opposite-sex couples.’ What is it really? Is this about genetics or about emotions?”

During his failed bid for the Iowa Senate, Clovis said that civil rights protections for LGBT people could lead to the same protections being applied to pedophiles.

“Someone who engages in LGBT behavior — I don’t know what the science is on this, I think it’s still out — but as far as we know, LGBT behavior is a choice they make,” Clovis says in a video obtained by CNN’s KFile. “So we’re being asked to provide Constitutional protections for behavior, a choice in behavior as opposed to a primary characteristic.”

“Someone who engages in LGBT behavior — I don’t know what the science is on this, I think it’s still out — but as far as we know, LGBT behavior is a choice they make.”

- Sam Clovis
Nominee for top science post at Dept. of Ag

When a questioner called Clovis out for his extreme views, he said it was simply a “logical extension of thought.”

INTERNATIONAL:

Life for gay Poles

What life under the Law and Justice Party means for LGBT Poles

The climate for LGBT Poles has deteriorated under the Law and Justice Party, which came to power in 2015. Attacks on LGBT individuals and organizations are on the rise; legal protections against discrimination remain limited; and curricula reforms privilege nationalist themes over messages of tolerance. In an email interview, A. Chaber, executive director of the Campaign Against Homophobia, explains how LGBT activists are trying to adapt.

WPR: What is the current state of LGBT rights in Poland, and how has it evolved in recent years?

A. Chaber: Poland is a member of the European Union, but it is something of an outlier on LGBT issues. According to ILGA-Europe, it scores second to last within the EU when it comes to recognizing the human rights of LGBT people. Even Ukraine, a country whose homophobia has become increasingly well known in recent years, scores better than Poland. The only protection from discrimination granted to lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people in Poland is contained in the Labor Code. This ban on discrimination based on sexual orientation was introduced as a requirement for EU accession. There is no similar measure covering gender identity.

There are still no legal avenues allowing same-sex couples to register their relationships with the state. Children born to LGB Polish parents abroad are denied Polish citizenship. Due to a presidential veto of the Legal Gender Recognition Act in 2015, transgender people are still forced to sue their parents in a civil court case to change their gender marker. This act, which was approved by lawmakers earlier in 2015, would have introduced administrative measures allowing for adult trans people to transition medically and legally on the basis of medical opinions, instead of having to resort to a civil court case.

LGBT people still have no protections against hate crimes in Poland. This last legal issue is the most worrying. Since 2015, attacks on LGBT individuals, clubs and organizations have become more frequent. Over this period, one in three LGBT people in Poland has faced physical violence, and half have experienced verbal assault, according to the Campaign Against Homophobia and the University of Warsaw Center for Research on Prejudice. The government of the right-wing Law and Justice Party, which came to power in 2015, is openly xenophobic, and is using divisive rhetoric that is radicalizing the far right. The government has also limited freedom of assembly, attacked the independence of the judiciary, changed school curricula and increased funding for right-wing and Catholic organizations. The Campaign Against Homophobia is working with media organizations as well as civil society groups to improve the situation, but many things are simply impossible without a human rights-based legal framework.

WPR: How do the politics of the Law and Justice Party and rising Euroskepticism interact with anti-LGBT sentiment in Poland?

Chaber: The Law and Justice Party is stoking a fear of everything that is foreign, and portraying the EU as an unwanted and harmful influence on Poland. The party is taking advantage of the refugee crisis to show, in their words, that the “EU is forcing Poland to harbor terrorists,” just as they say it has “forced” Poland to adopt the so-called gay agenda. By portraying concern for LGBT rights as a product of foreign influence, the party is contributing to the isolation of Poland’s LGBT community.

Luckily, in spite of these efforts, polls show that anti-LGBT attitudes are not, generally speaking, on the rise in Poland. This is thanks to many years of powerful awareness-raising campaigns conducted by civil society organizations here. Nonetheless, even if the number of anti-LGBT Poles is not growing, the intensity of hate is. In Poland today, loyal followers of the ruling party, as well as a number of radical nationalist groups, are growing in power and resources. They are increasingly dominating public discourse and public spaces, and in so doing they are making it much more difficult for LGBT people and their allies to live openly. These factions are building a climate of indifference toward human rights violations in Poland.

The Law and Justice Party has only been in power for two years, which is not long enough to dramatically change social attitudes. But given the alterations of school curricula, which removed elements emphasizing nondiscrimination while embracing more nationalist messaging, and the entrenchment of other policies, we might soon live in a society where any individual who is not white, straight, cisgender and Catholic is unwanted.

WPR: What are the main priorities for Poland’s LGBT rights movement currently, and how are its tactics similar to and different from LGBT movements in the U.S. and elsewhere in Europe?

Chaber: Passing legal protections for LGBT people will be close to impossible in Poland for a number of years. Additionally, we see a number of growing threats on the horizon. The government may try, for example, to limit the operations of our organization by introducing restrictions on receiving funding from foreign foundations, banning activities concerning youth, or simply freezing assets by stating the organization is working against Polish interests. It

Please see **GAY POLES**, page **27**

Education beyond high school matters

If education is a lifelong challenge, are community colleges the answer? Are they the resource to which new and returning, older students can turn?

At one point during his presidency, Barak Obama laid out proposals to revamp the tax code by raising taxes and fees on the wealthiest Americans and largest financial entities. The additional money from these taxes would be used to pay for free tuition for two years of community college.

Harrisburg Area Community College (HACC) is Pennsylvania's first community college, created in 1964 by the State Legislature. *The Central Voice* asked Vic Rodgers, associate provost, Workforce Development at HACC, to comment.

Central Voice: With life-long education a fact of life, how do community colleges fit into an employer's plan to recruit well-trained employees?

Vic Rodgers: Community colleges across the nation are filling this vital need by forming partnerships with business and industry. These partnerships not only address ways to continually "upskill" their existing workforce, but to identify the new hires who have the foundational skills necessary for lifelong learning in specialized fields. Additionally, industry is crucial in helping community colleges develop the most relevant training by acting as the "experts" who advise and guide the college.

CV: How can a savvy employee use the resources of a community college to stay marketable in a changing world?

VR: The most efficient way to utilize the many educational opportunities offered by HACC, Central Pennsylvania's Community College, and other community colleges is for an employee to know the career pathway for their particular sector. With this knowledge, it's much easier and less costly. Knowing where the next rung in the career ladder is will allow an individual the ability to chart a course toward reaching it. If an employee is unsure about their particular career pathway, they can find guidance at one of the Welcome Centers at HACC's five campuses.

CV: Students and parents hear so much about the future potential of 'green jobs'.

VR: One of the many points of value that community colleges bring to the workforce development discussion is their flexibility. This means we can pivot toward any industry need as it develops. The challenge with specific green job education is that there must be a specific industry need. Without that "pull" from industry, there is very little employment potential for those who are trained to work in green jobs. There is certainly an awareness of the benefits renewable energy can bring to any community, and we eagerly look forward to the day when our industries are asking us to meet the challenge of providing education and training for green jobs.

CV: Add anything you think is important.

VR: As the opportunities within our business communities change, HACC, along with the other community colleges in our nation, are poised to meet the challenge. Community colleges have the ability to meet an individual's needs wherever they are in life, and give them the education and training their situation demands. Whether it is a diploma, certificate or a two-year degree or short-term skilled training, the community college is the answer for today's environment of lifelong learning.

Coal crackers get new piece for regional mine history

Local partners and the Department of Environmental Protection recently dedicated a new addition to the Pioneer Tunnel Coal Mine tourism site in Schuylkill County that represents a big piece of regional history: a 35-foot headframe from a local coal mine.

"This project enhances the educational experience at Pioneer Tunnel and adds an asset to the local tourism economy, while providing a lasting reminder of the integral role anthracite mining plays in northeast Pennsylvania," said John Stefanko, DEP Deputy Secretary for Active and Abandoned Mine Operations.

The headframe once stood at Bowman's shaft at North Mahanoy Colliery, where hundreds of local workers passed under it to enter the mine during operations from the mid-1850s to 1931.

The work on the abandoned mine land near the Pioneer Tunnel, completed in 2015, included salvaging the headframe; backfilling a 165-foot-deep mine shaft near several homes; and removing an old pump house, a deteriorated reinforced concrete electrical house and various concrete foundations. The site was regraded and revegetated.

DEP awarded funding through the 2016 Abandoned Mine Land Pilot Program to Pioneer Tunnel to refurbish and erect the headframe at the tourism site.

Don't know much about history

Ally in the Academy

By Trum Simmons

Rock 'n' roll fans (well, those of a certain age) will recognize the Sam Cooke song in the headline. *What a Wonderful World* begins with all the things he doesn't know, followed by "but I do know that I love you…" Oh, that wonderful smooth voice!

The number of the American people who don't know history is beyond counting, and every year surveys remind us of this fact.

In 1980 historian and activist Howard Zinn (1922-2010) published *A People's History of the United States,* and if you haven't read it, I hope you'll purchase a copy after learning about it here.

The latest edition includes an introductory essay by Matt Damon, who writes that he found it "life-changing," even making sure he mentioned the book in his first movie, "Good Will Hunting," when his character says that it "will knock you on your ass."

What differentiates this history book from so many others? Listen to Zinn say why he wrote it: "I wanted to awaken a greater consciousness of class conflict, racial injustice, sexual inequality and national arrogance." He wrote from a specific point of view, believing "there is no such thing as a pure fact, innocent of interpretation."

"The number of American people who don't know history is beyond counting..."

By 2017 many of us know that Christopher Columbus was not just a navigator and discoverer but also a man responsible for genocide, thanks in part to the attention paid to that side of the story during the Quincentennary celebrations in 1992-93.

But did you know about all the people who came to the New World via Virginia in the early 1600s and who subsequently became indentured servants? In 1619, the Virginia House of Burgesses provided for the recording and enforcing of contracts between servants and masters.

No, we are not talking about African slaves. These were European folks who came to America in ships enduring conditions somewhat similar to those of the slave ships. For example, in 1741 a ship arrived with only 60 of its 106 original passengers. The rest had died during the 16-week voyage from Belfast, Ireland.

It shouldn't surprise us that the servants rose up against their harsh treatment by their masters during Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. In response, Governor Berkeley wrote, "How miserable that man is that Governs a People where six parts of seven at least are Poore, Endebted Discontented and Armed."

You probably also know the label "robber barons" as applied to men like J.P. Morgan, John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie. In Zinn's book we get the details, and they don't speak well of these "great men." Yes, they also did some good things, but Zinn gives us a dispiriting picture of their brutal impact on working men and women and the subsequent rise of the union movement (By 1914 "the IWW seemed to be everywhere," Zinn writes. "Class conflict was intense.")

In his chapters War is the Health of the State and A People's War? Zinn will make you rethink much of you know--or think you know--about World Wars I and ll. The reasons our leaders gave for these wars may have had some truth, but what they didn't tell us was just as important. Were these the people's wars or were they also something else?

If you watched Ken Burns' latest documentary, *The Vietnam War*, earlier this fall, you also need to know that Zinn's treatment of the war is all in the title of his chapter "The Impossible Victory: Vietnam."

Back to the title of Sam Cooke's song. Our nation's current president continues to show that he doesn't know much about history--yet another dispiriting and scary fact.

His ignorance about the U.S. Civil War and Andrew Jackson was on full display when he told a newspaper he wondered why issues that triggered the war "could not have been worked out."

And regarding his citing Andrew Jackson as his role model for populism, just read what Zinn has to say about that: "Jackson the slave holder, land speculator, executioner of dissident soldiers, exterminator of Indians."

In an afterword to this latest edition, Zinn apologized for his slight treatment of LGBTQ history and explains that he had not been well versed in this area. While some might deride him for this, I take his statement as coming from a man who had no problem admitting his shortcomings. And I say good for him.

Trum Simmons is a professor at Harrisburg Area Community College

U.S. Supreme Court ruling leaves room for Texas court to deny spousal benefits

A unanimous Texas Supreme Court concluded June 30 that there is no established right to government-provided spousal benefits in same-sex marriages.

The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that established the right to same-sex marriage did not decide all marriage-related matters, leaving room for state courts to explore the decision's "reach and ramifications," the all-Republican Texas court said.

Supporters of gay marriage have vowed to appeal such a ruling to the federal courts, arguing that the U.S. Supreme Court clearly stated that all marriages must be treated equally.

The case arose out of then-Houston Mayor Annise Parker's 2013 decision to grant benefits to same-sex spouses of city employees who had married in other states.

A lawsuit encouraged by leading social conservatives in Houston prompted a state district judge to issue an injunction barring Houston from extending the benefits, saying Parker violated a state law and an amendment to the Texas Constitution that prohibited same-sex marriage or any action recognizing a same-sex union.

While an appeal from Houston was pending, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its June 2015 opinion that overturned state bans on gay marriage, prompting the appeals court to lift the injunction.

Two taxpayers, including Christian pastor Jack Pidgeon, next turned to the all-Republican Texas Supreme Court, which initially rejected their appeal in September, with only one member, Justice John Devine, dissenting.

A campaign by social and religious conservatives produced a barrage of emails asking the eight other justices to reconsider or risk a backlash in the next GOP primary. Leading Republicans — including Gov. Greg Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Attorney General Ken Paxton — joined the call, and in January the court issued a rarely granted motion to rehear the case and set oral arguments for March 1.

Hate groups in US tracked; Pennsylvania ranks fifth

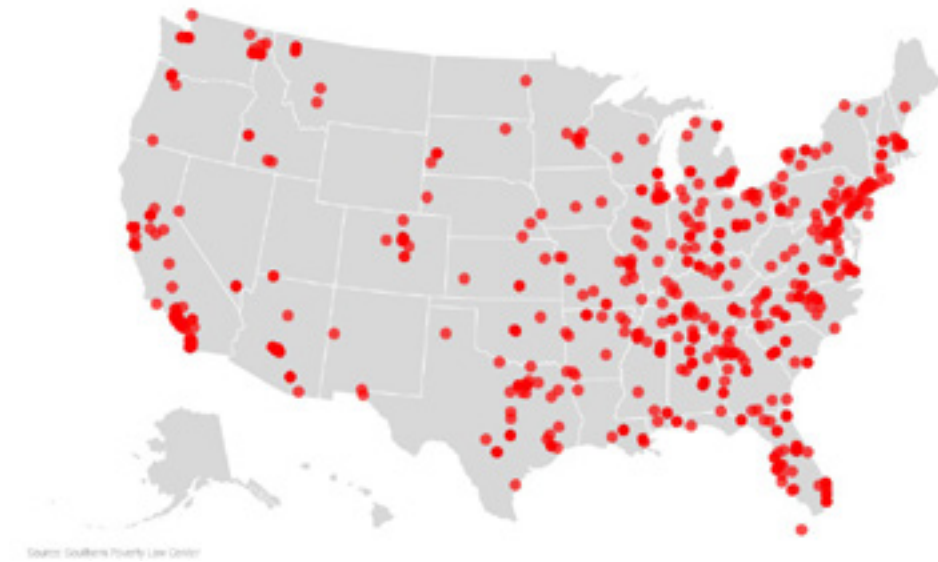
The Southern Poverty Law Center says there 917 hate groups in the US. Pennsylvania had the fifth-highest number of hate groups in the country.

The Alabama-based nonprofit activist group tracks civil rights and hate crimes and defines a hate group as an organization with "beliefs or practices that attack or malign an entire class of people, typically for their immutable characteristics."

"Over the course of a year, we have a team of investigators that scours the internet for racist publications and real world activities to find out which groups exist, which groups are still active and which groups come along," said Ryan Lenz, a senior investigative reporter for the SPLC's Hatewatch project.

2015 Pennsylvania stats:

- Pennsylvania had the fifth-highest number of hate groups in the country, behind Texas, California, Florida and Tennessee.
- The Ku Klux Klan had the highest number of active hate groups in the country. Of the 190 total groups, nine were in Pennsylvania.
- Of the 180 black separatist groups in the U.S., eight were in Pennsylvania.
- There were three active white nationalists groups and three active neo-nazi groups in Pennsylvania.
- The state was home to 60 active antigovernment groups. There were 998 extreme antigovernment groups in the country.



Dots represent the hate groups operating out of each state, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center

VISIBILITY: Lehigh Valley Transgender Renaissance From page 1

Has the current political environment affected Goodwin?

Expressing hate has been emboldened. "Locally we've had incidents of high school students chanting anti-gay slogans in hallways," She notes. "If President Trump has his way we'll have a trans military ban. It just seems easier for the haters to hate and to be open about it all," she says with dismay in her voice.

Transgender people of color are facing more challenges, Goodwin says. So far in 2017, there have been 20 reported killings of transgender individuals, many people of color. To address the imbalance, LVTR supports Project Silk for younger people of color with Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center. "We want the youth of color to know we're here and we understand."

Goodwin shares that her experience has shown her that there are transgender people in every phase of the journey.

"In our region, we have truly closeted trans people not out now, perhaps may never come out. We have individuals who are on the journey of transitioning. And we have individuals who have successfully transitioned. We have members that fall into all of these categories," Goodwin says.

Visibility pays off.

"We have about 50 active members attending meetings. And another 170 people on our mailing list," Goodwin says. In the last year, the web site has had over 2,600 unique visitors generating over 6,000 page views.

"We have web site visitors from all 50 states and 31 countries. Over half of our visitors are from the Pennsylvania and New Jersey area," she explains. The most popular pages are Resources and Spouses/Significant Others.

What's the single, most important transgender issue to Goodwin?

"Education and outreach to the larger community is paramount. We need to make allies to advocate and fight for us," she says. Reaching out will assist with issues like anti-trans violence, healthcare, the workplace, jobs conditions, Goodwin notes.

"Educating healthcare providers that trans people should be addressed as the gender they identify with," Goodwin stresses. How assisted care facilities treat trans people is also important, she points out.

What's the single, most important non-transgender or non-lgb issue to Goodwin?

"I really want to creating meaningful dialogue across social and political aisles," she says. "There's a time and place for shouting and assertiveness, it should be rare. If we have respectful relationships, we can advocate more effectively for ourselves," she says.

Goodwin says of her political transition, "Until 2000, I voted Republican. But I believe the Republican Party has moved away from the Center." She wants the government to stay out of her way. "I want adequate police, defense, solid infrastructure, and a safety net. But politicians need to stay out of our bedrooms. They need to stop enforcing their own personal brand of morality on everyone around them." Although Goodwin is political the organization is not.

She also opines that there is a difference between equality of opportunity and equity of outcome.

"Everyone, and I mean everyone, deserves the opportunity to achieve what makes them happy. That does not mean, or guarantee, that everyone will have the same outcome. That's how life works and is why we need to work hard and stand up for ourselves. That is what LV Renaisance is all about - supporting trans people in their goals to lead genuine and productive lives. Goodwin says.

Info - www.renaissancelv.org

Are guns an LGBT issue?

By Nadine Smith, CEO, Equality Florida

It has happened again. A man opened fire.

At least 58 dead, 500+ injured.

Another horrific, inevitable, preventable, senseless tragedy. Pulse has been eclipsed as the worst mass shooting in US history. And this one will be too. Somewhere, the profile tells us, there is another disaffected, angry man, likely with a history of domestic violence who is building an arsenal like the one reportedly in the shooter's room as he slaughtered people from his balcony. His twisted sense of masculinity and entitlement coupled with an internet that feeds his petty grievances into a noble mission in his deluded mind. Had everyone at the concert been armed they could not have stopped the killing. He opened fire at his leisure from a tactically superior vantage point. More guns aren't making us more safe. More military-style weaponry is killing us with regularity. I'm heartbroken about Las Vegas. But right now all I can feel is rage at the predictability of it and the utter failure of our leaders to do a damn thing.

- The Central Voice (March-April 2017) in one of its ongoing series of stories called Intersection, asked the question – Do gays need guns?

POLES: Life under Law and Justice party rule

From page 24

could also provide more resources to anti-LGBT organizations. Therefore, our current priority is to work with Poles—including professionals such as the police, teachers, psychologists, prosecutors, doctors and nurses—who have the most influence over the daily lives of LGBT people. Through going back to the grassroots and influencing the hearts and minds of people in small towns, schools, stores and offices, we hope to create a movement that will oppose violence and discrimination.

The tactics used in Poland differ from other countries on many levels. In many Western European countries and in the U.S., the distance between decision-makers and citizens is quite small, and people are able to contact their representatives to convey their worries. By contrast, this kind of mobilization of the public to pressure the government is more difficult in Poland. Decision-makers remain detached. The private sector isn't as engaged either. Lastly, LGBT and human rights issues have not become a major electoral issue so far, with voters focusing more on economic issues.

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